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BOOK NOTES FOR MARCH

All for the love of a lady

CHARLES was no highbrow. He was a man of action, yet the little blind god, with his usual inconsequence, decreed that Charles should see his heart's desire in the being of a literary lady who had a most reverend regard for all who could confess to authorship. And so she was adamant to Charles' suit. But, as I said before, he was a man of action and he soon had his plan of campaign worked out. Alas for Charles, yet to the good fortune of the reader, complications arose and many hilarious vicissitudes had to be endured before the cold heart of the lady was weaned from its strange liking. *Inky Wooing* is a delicious comedy and Mr. Lambourne is at his most inventive.



JOHN LAMBOURNE.

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BOOK NOTES FOR MARCH

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MARCH, 1935

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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

EDITED BY
LORD GORELL

MARCH, 1935.

PAGE

GALLIPOLI: 20 YEARS AFTER	<i>E. Thornton Cook</i>	257
THE UNFINISHED 'CORROBOREE'	<i>Robert M. Macdonald</i>	264
WILLOWS: A POEM	<i>Frank Eyre</i>	276
INKY WOOING: CHAPTERS XIX-END	<i>John Lambourne</i>	277
THE SONG OF THE OLD GREEN ROAD	<i>Muriel Holman</i>	303
VALEDICTION: A STORY	<i>Peter Norman</i>	305
FRONT HALLS	<i>G. M. N. Ramsay</i>	318
ON A CANADIAN RIVER	<i>Thurstan Topham</i>	324
THE BARWICK STONE: A STORY	<i>Winifred F. Peck</i>	329
AT OSSIAN'S GRAVE—GLEN ANN	<i>M. E. Morton</i>	346
CHEETAH	<i>Mary Gillett</i>	347
THE MAN WHO MOVED THE MOUNTAINS: A STORY	<i>G. M. T. Parsons</i>	350
ROYALTY AND A GOVERNESS	<i>B. Dew Roberts</i>	355
THE FINGER POST: A POEM	<i>C. Fox Smith</i>	366
HORACE UNTRANSLATED	<i>Henry Birkhead</i>	367
MR. TEETLE: A STORY	<i>G. Lapage</i>	368
THE SPANISH MAIN TO-DAY: III. FLOOD	<i>Ravdon Hoare</i>	372
NIGHTFALL, BRITISH COLUMBIA: A POEM	<i>Grace Jackson</i>	379
THE RUNNING BROOKS	380
LITERARY COMPETITION	384



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A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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THE LEADING WEEKLY SINCE 1828

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1935.

GALLIPOLI: TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

BY E. THORNTON COOK.

IN the dawn of an incredibly blue day a pilgrim ship rounded Apollo's island of Tenedos behind which Ulysses had concealed his fleet while the Trojans dragged the famous Wooden Horse into the heart of Troy. The sea mists scattered. Entering the narrow waters of the Dardanelles we saw the date March 18, 1915, marked in colossal white figures on the Asiatic side of the straits, and men's eyes grew grim. We on the pilgrim ship needed no untoward reminder of that black day during the Great War when, on the renewal of the bombardment by the Allied Fleet, the *Buget*, *Ocean* and *Irresistible* were lost and the *Inflexible*, the *Gaulois* and the *Suffren* were put out of action. Only the young among us had thought for other things; of the maiden Helle drowned in the Hellespont when (fleeing from the tyranny of a stepmother) she lost her hold on the golden fleece of the mythical winged ram; of Admiral Duckworth's dash to Constantinople with seven ships of the line!

Anchoring above Nagara, where 1,600 yards divides Europe from Asia, we transhipped into Turkish dhows or lighters and drifted down with the current.

Some spoke of Leander, who, having watched Hero offer her sacrifice of turtle's blood at the Festival of Venus, loved at first sight, and nightly swam these waters from Abydos to Sestos; others quoted Byron, who had emulated Leander's feat; but for the most part men were silent while their eyes ranged the coast, identifying landmarks or scrutinising the old maps they had used during the War—some of which were dated 1906!

Suddenly we realised the passage of time. These men were grey-haired; they had been young that other April, when, units in a great armada, they had sailed from Lemnos whereat the Argonauts had touched seeking the Golden Fleece.

Who has told the story like John Masefield?

... 'the transports (all painted black) lay in tiers well within the harbour, the men-of-war nearer Mudros and the entrance. Now,

in all that city of ships, so busy with passing picket boats and noisy with the labour of men, the getting of the anchors began. Ship after ship, crammed with soldiers, moved slowly out of the harbour in the lovely day, and felt again the heave of the sea.

'No such gathering of fine ships had ever been seen upon this earth, and the beauty and the exultation of the youth upon them made them seem like sacred things as they moved away. All the thousands of the men aboard them gathered on deck to see, till each rail was thronged. These men had come from all parts of the British world, from Africa, Australia, Canada, India and the Mother Country, New Zealand, and remote islands in the sea. . . . They went like kings in a pageant to the imminent death. As they passed from moorings to the man-of-war anchorage on their way to the sea their feeling that they had done with life and were going to something new welled up in those battalions; they cheered and cheered till the harbour rang with cheering. As each ship crammed with soldiers drew near the battleships the men swung their caps and cheered again, and the sailors answered, and the noise of cheering swelled, and the men on the ships not yet moving joined in, till all the life in the harbour was giving thanks that it could go to death rejoicing. All was beautiful in that gladness of men about to die, but the most moving thing was the greatness of their generous hearts. . . .

'They left the harbour very, very slowly; this tumult of cheering lasted a long time; no one who heard it will ever forget it or think of it unshaken. It broke the hearts of all there with pity and with pride.' . . .¹

We have remembered. Isolated groups have made the journey through Asia Minor to Chanak, thence across the Narrows to the peninsula and those cemeteries which in literal fact are 'for ever England' having been ceded under Treaty, and twice, with the grudging acquiescence of the Turks, pilgrim ships have steamed up the Dardanelles bringing men and women gathered from all parts of the world.

Landing we found ourselves among the débris of war. Stakes still stood upright on the beach, barbed wire tore at our knees and the remains of a torpedoed Turkish transport jutted up out of the water. Twenty years ago? Nonsense, it all happened yesterday!

Men stood silent under the shot-riddled walls of Sedd-el-Bahr, remembering the fire which had belched forth upon that modern Horse of Troy, the collier *River Clyde*, and over the shot-swept

¹ *Gallipoli*, by John Masefield.

lighters which bridged the way to 'V' beach—a sandy strip of soil some 300 yards long and perhaps 10 yards wide.

One spoke of the Second Battle of Krithia by which in May we had hoped to reach the height of Achi Baba; one told of the August landing at Suvla when from destroyers and over-full lighters, life-boats, barges, cross-channel steamers, and Isle of Man paddle-boats and Thames tugs, 25,000 men landed in seven hours:

'A lad of sixteen steered my picket-boat,' said one man, seeing the past more clearly than the present, 'and the first thing we saw on nearing shore was a boy of his own age lying shot through the head with his feet in the water. "So this is Paris!" says our youngster and stood to the salute—that was the spirit of them.'

Separating, we drifted on into the long-deserted trenches and found them fragrant with growing herbs.

Wild Iris camouflaged the entrance to a lonely observation post beyond a smashed gun half-hidden by overgrown thorn bushes and stunted Turkish oaks. Millions of 'Stars of Bethlehem' carpeted the yellow, deep-rutted track which led across the peninsula. The gleaming memorials to our dead seemed like white fingers pointing towards a sky as azure as the Ægean Sea.

'Imbros, Hamilton's headquarters,' said a man, looking towards a blue island fourteen miles distant.

'Samothrace,' muttered another, his eyes on dimly purple peaks and his thoughts with Rupert Brooke and those who had fought and died with him:

' . . . These laid the world away; poured out the red,
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be,
Of work and joy, and that unhopèd serene
That men call age; and those who would have been
Their sons, they gave their immortality.'

Scattered over the tongue-like land were Turkish soldiers watching us with dark inscrutable eyes; among them were some of the very men who had fought against us; to-day they were our guardians.

'Engleesh?' queried a long-legged youth bestriding an incredibly small donkey, and paused to offer cigarettes.

We passed on over the sun-baked land carrying the wreathes we had brought to lay in the quiet cemeteries.

One morning, while at sea, these had been fetched on deck and laid before an improvised altar covered with the Union Jack.

The 'padre' who officiated had served as a stretcher-bearer during the evacuation of Gallipoli in order that he might remain till the end :

'Almighty God who has made us citizens of this realm enable us to be worthy of those who died for us,' he prayed.

Now, scrambling up the hills and through the ravines, more than one of us felt a sure conviction that the great company of the fallen were giving us welcome ; they were rallying to meet us in spirit, glad that we remembered, and had come.

Sometimes on foot, sometimes in dangerously antiquated vehicles—Ford cars, Turkish 'Black Marias' with barred sides, derelict mail vans, brakeless, hooter-less, and with shattered windows—we covered the peninsula, struggling through thorn bushes and barbed wire, over roughly bridged trenches, passed great dumps of rusted milk cans, bully-beef tins and abandoned, ruined guns.

We climbed Scimitar Hill upon which our men had charged through mists, scrub fire and stifling smoke—one of the most costly of all the tragic actions in Gallipoli ; we reached Krithia, thrice battled for and never won, and rested at Lone Pine, where had been fought an action so gallant that seven V.C.'s were awarded. We stood on Chunuk Bair wherefrom Mustapha Kemal Pasha had made his personal reconnaissance and up which the New Zealanders had charged on an August morning only to find themselves under fire from Battleship and Q Hills ; reserves could not reach them and those who had gained the summit held on till every man was killed.

One morning we climbed Achi Baba, that dominating crest always desired, never attained ; we found it trenched to the top, with the guns that had made it a veritable volcano still in position, if rusted and smashed. Coming down the sun-baked slope men remembered the thirst that had tortured them twenty years before, a thirst so great that death itself had seemed a small price to pay for a pannikin of water :

'We had a Welsh diviner in our battalion but no one would believe him, though he swore that he had located a good supply of water,' said one man with thoughts in the past. 'He was jeered at and told that if he had, it would not be drinkable since we were barely four miles from the sea, but he persisted, the engineers sank a shaft—and—the fellow was right.'

The life of the peninsula went on around us. We saw poverty-stricken villages and encampments of refugees ; a grey-bearded shepherd in little more than fez and loin-cloth tending a flock of

sheep among which minced a few cranes; groups of Turkish women shrouded to the eyes (despite decrees) working among the meagre crops. Puppies grappled with one another in the dust and sturdy brown children scampered to the schools Mustapha Kemal had built in every village; Turkish policemen standing at the gates solemnly boxed the ears of all late-comers!

Climbing ridge on ridge, seeking the old communication trenches in the deep ravines once known so well, men forgot their intervening years and generals spoke out of their wisdom:

'Half the trouble was that our men had had peace-time training and brought peace-minds to war conditions,' insisted one. 'When I landed the junior officer sent to guide me explained that the walk was quite healthy except in one sector which the Turks shelled whenever it became congested. Pressing him as to whether the danger spot could not be avoided I was told "no" since "there were growing crops on each side."'

We stopped to rest and a machine-gunner standing in the centre of a declivity recounted how he and his company had been decoyed to the spot and fired on from every side when, on a false order, they had laid aside their arms. Other men spoke. One had been on a trawler, which, tied to another boat as small and slow as herself, had swept the Narrows day after day under Turkish fire. . . . Another had spent seven weeks on a submarine in the Sea of Marmora; eighty feet down his struggling vessel had cut its way through the Turkish nets. The relieving submarine had been lost with all hands and this man had brought a wreath to cast upon the waters in memory of an old shipmate who had gone down with her.

Among the belts of firs and stunted oaks, through waving tamarisk bushes and over paths of scented herbs we found the cemeteries into which our men have been gathered from the steep hillsides to lie in peace among the beauty that has been created for them by the Imperial War Graves Commission. Bushes of rosemary and beds of flowering stock have blotted out the trenches which were once so close together that hands could almost meet; bombs were often thrown, caught, and flung again.

We sought Suvla, Anzac and Hill 10, Pink Farm with its clustering roses, the cruciform of Green Hill, Skew Bridge, and Chocolate Hill. We passed the Sphinx Rock and the desolate Turkish grave-stones that are a memorial to the men who won Gallipoli for Turkey 200 years ago. Walker's Ridge, Quinn's Post and the Redoubt, Johnson's Jolly and Steele's Post; some among us found

one and some another. Here stood an obelisk and there a cairn out of the centre of which projected a cross. And every guarded cemetery seemed an oasis in this sun-smitten land that yet can know such bitter cold.

Like a magnet Helles drew us all. Here, set in a great square, stands the gleaming memorial to the tens of thousands of those, who, having no known resting-place, yet 'found safety with all things undying.' On the panels along the walls are carved the honoured names of those ships and units which gave of their companies to the dust of Gallilopi or to the blue waters which ripple against the line of the shore.

Here and there stood a Turkish sentinel, and, in the distance, hovered refugee Greeks, but we who came from afar scarcely noticed them, for now one and now another who had seen the accomplishment of that miracle, the evacuation of Cape Helles, took up the tale.

'In November there was a blizzard—5,000 casualties from frost-bite—in December, Anzac and Suvla were evacuated, and we at Helles were left alone—At home they talked of "loss of prestige" and "the necessity of holding on through the winter." . . . The Turks were suspicious. General von Sanders gave orders that we were not to be allowed to escape as the others had done.' . . .

Said another: 'Orders came through on Christmas Day and the navy undertook to take off 15,000 men and 50 guns in a night. Somehow, unknown to the enemy, the rest of us must be got away before then with whatever it was necessary to salvage—ammunition—animals—stores. . . . To avert suspicion we began to accustom the Turks to alternate zones of gun-fire and silence—when these were first introduced he had an unpleasant habit of coming across to make a personal investigation of our trenches—we had to cure him of that.

'Working with sand-bags and socks over our boots we removed stores from the *inside* of the dumps, leaving a mere framework. We bayoneted bully-beef tins; we destroyed vehicles; we laid fuses—all this by night and silently.' . . .

'There were 35,000 men to be got away from the rear trenches and all "V" beach was under observation,' said a man with eyes sombre in remembrance.

Another nodded: 'We filled in communication trenches for fear groups should go astray on the last night; we laid trails for them to follow; we prepared lists of names. . . . Then the wind

sprang up and till the eleventh hour men worked quarrying stone to repair the piers.' . . .

The tale was taken up: 'I was waiting by the gap when a fellow came through and whispered "last man"—we all whispered that night. We waited—it seemed a long time. No more came through so we crept about a bit on hands and knees just to make sure, then closed down the barbed wire, laid a fuse, and went. . . . The beach seemed a bit congested and everyone was waiting for orders.'

'Our trenches had been empty for two and a half hours before the last boat pushed off,' said one man quietly. 'Then the magazine went up, and the Verey lights began over the Turkish lines.' . . .

'They shelled the beach from Achi Baba and "Asiatic Annie" joined in,' added a former speaker; then silence fell and we looked over the blue waters—remembering.

We of the pilgrimage were to see Helles once again as our ship passed silently on its way. Men's faces set hard and we lined the decks in silence. Achi Baba was a misty blue against the darkening sky towards which the giant memorial pointed like a white finger.

Ah, we were glad that we had come! Surely now the spirits of our dead will rest more peacefully?

THE UNFINISHED 'CORROBOREE.'

BY ROBERT M. MACDONALD.

NORTH AUSTRALIA is at present in the limelight of the world, and as the Commonwealth Government of Australia has decided to hand over the vast unknown region bearing that name to Chartered Companies for development purposes, it will probably soon become the Mecca of all fortune-seekers. It is an enormous tract of country, and has practically no white population outside the town of Darwin on its north-west coast, the inhabitants of a few scattered cattle stations on the Roper River and on one or two permanent water-holes, and some wandering prospectors who are for ever in search of eldorado throughout its grim interior. It was previously known as the northern territory of the State of South Australia but, as communication between Adelaide, the capital of that State, and Port Darwin as the northern town was then called, meant a sea journey half-way round the Australian Continent and the expense of administering that useless part of the world was a continual tax on the wealth of South Australia, that State eventually transferred its northern territory to the Australian Commonwealth Government, and it is now known as the State of North Australia. The Commonwealth Government, however, now apparently fears that Australia cannot be kept an 'All White' land if North Australia remains unoccupied by white people, knowing that teeming millions of yellow men who can live on a handful of rice per day, or—at least—in country where the white men would starve, are awaiting an opportunity of swooping southwards upon it. Hence, probably, the idea of populating North Australia with white people by means of Chartered Companies.

But this great land which is flanked by Queensland and West Australia on its east and west, and which stretches to the south until its silent bush of mulga and motionless ghidgya scrub merges into that of South Australia, is not quite so unknown as most people suppose. True, many early explorers have left their bones to bleach on its scorching sands in silent but eloquent testimony of their vain endeavours to penetrate its fastnesses, but present-day prospectors have succeeded where the old explorers failed,

and they know that North Australia is a land of mineral reefs and hidden (sand-covered) gold formations, which are of little value to them because there is no water near them. These men are none the less daring than were the explorers, but they are not concerned with geographical discoveries and do not, knowingly, risk their lives unless in quest of gold or gems or anything else they can turn into currency.

I was a member of such a party of prospectors recently. We had come into North Australia by way of a small outpost township in Queensland called Camoweal and had no particular object in our minds beyond looking for outcropping reefs of minerals, although we were always hoping to run across some signs or indications which might lead to the finding of a famous prospector who had gone into the country a year before and had not returned. A nomadic tribe of desert natives had reported somewhere that this man had found a marvellously rich reef of gold and had died beside it, but, as the men in flying machines who had been sent out by the Government to search for the reef had not found it, there was little chance that ordinary prospectors would relocate it. Besides, we did not believe the story of the dead man's reef, and we thought that the supposed finder might be alive still, though wandering aimlessly in the heart of desert Australia.

One afternoon as we were camped by a water-hole at the base of a lime bluff which rose about three hundred feet above the surface of the scrub-covered land and apparently afforded a temporary home for a tribe of aborigines, Big Sam suddenly remarked, 'Well, I don't think much of the natives of this part of the world. That lot over there by the lime bluff don't look as if they could fight rabbits. I expect they have no intelligence.'

'What does that matter?' asked Mac, 'When they came round us this morning to see what they could steal we all saw that the *gins* (women) were wearing nuggets of gold as ornaments on their bare bodies, and if they know where to get gold they have all the knowledge they need.'

'Those natives over there belong to what is now supposed to be the oldest race of human beings in the world,' began Old Riddell, who was known amongst us as the Professor, 'I expect they have forgotten more than ever we learned—'

'Yes, old man,' Mac broke in, sarcastically, 'maybe the aborigines knew all about wireless telegraphy before we were born, an' maybe talking pictures is an old invention of theirs?'

'It may be so,' said the wise man, blandly, 'at any rate, Dr. Warner, the famous American scientist who came over to Australia to study the natives, says that the brain of the aboriginal is like the dying embers of a fire which was once fierce and still can be fanned into activity——'

'Then let us take some tobacco, sugar and jam from our pack-saddles and go over to their camp now and try to fan the brains of some,' I suggested, and as my interruption had stayed the Professor's flow of eloquence for the time, and we had to do something to prevent him from beginning again, we took some items from our stores and walked over to the native camp.

The natives were in a state of excitement, but we speedily discovered that a 'smoke-talk' was in progress and that it, not our visit, was the cause; and while we were speaking to the old Chief, who informed us proudly that his name among the white men he had met over in Queensland was Hungry Billy, some of the old men of the tribe were scanning faint clouds which were rising above the horizon in the western sky, and two younger males (evidently instructed by them) were sending aloft large slow-moving rings of smoke and, occasionally, some smaller puffs which ascended much more quickly and passed through the larger smoke circles when well into the upper regions of the atmosphere. From the half-dozen fires which the *gins* were tending, as instructed, with selected grasses and fronds of sandalwood and ti-tree scrub other natives were also sending up dense clouds of smoke which, though shapeless when they began to soar, assumed various forms when well into the ambient sky. I estimated that the tribe was comprised of about forty members, including men, women and children, and all were engaged in some way (bringing in special forms of vegetation as required, heating the fires or throwing sand upon them when necessary) in making the smoke-talk with the people beyond the rim of the desert a great success. Some knew a word or two of English, which they had acquired over the Queensland border, but most spoke only in a dialect of their own, easily understandable by us because of the pantomimic gestures of the speakers and our own knowledge of the language of other northern tribes.

'Big noise-making bird come down alonga blackfella camp an' no' able rise again,' said Hungry Billy to us by way of explaining what the smoke-talk had been about.

'That noise-making bird was an aeroplane, Hungry Billy,' I put in concernedly, and my comrades were also worried. 'It

didn't come down in the desert because it wanted to rest itself. Likely it is short of petrol. Where is the place ?'

'Oh, blackfellows who smoke-talk with us no' say where they are. They say they think big noise-making bird is *kaditcha* (devil-magic) an' keep away from him. I think alonga them, for if big noisy bird no get water him must die soon.'

'The man it carries will not last long out in a waterless desert, anyhow,' Big Sam groaned. 'Look here, Billy. Can't you think hard for a bit ? Where is it likely that that big noise-making bird came down ? How far away are the other smoke-talking black fellows ? Could we ride to them ?'

'Hungry Billy no' understand lot o' what your talky say,' the Chief interrupted, 'but he think that you mean to ride far away an' p'raps help *kaditcha* bird ? Well, I think you no' able do any good to him. Bird comes down to groun', I think, near place where is plenty of yellow stones like what our *gins* have—you white fellows call it gold I think—an' smoke-talk say big fire-corroboree is gettin' ready there now, an' blackfellows kill you.'

'We've never been killed before,' mused Mac. 'Maybe it wouldn't matter much if some niggers tried the killing business. I noticed that the smoke-clouds of the far-away blackfellows were rising some points to the south of west.'

'We'll ride in that direction,' I said, and the Professor added some words to the effect that we could at least bury the forced-down aviator's bones if we found them.

'My people are makin' ready something for you people to see to-ni,' broke in the Chief who, not understanding half of what had been said, had no idea that his words were irrelevant, and we, not wishing to offend him, signified that we felt honoured by being invited to see anything the natives could show us. Hungry Billy then went off to superintend matters and we fraternised with the tribal sorcerer and other important tribesmen.

Hungry Billy was not long in seeing that everything was in order, and, when he reappeared on a ledge a few feet up the face of the lime bluff and gave a signal, the people below made signs and noises of anticipation which we had only seen and heard previously among Australian aborigines when some tobacco or something for eating had been promised them. We gave them the tobacco we had brought over for them so that they should not be disappointed on that score, but we thought we were in for a boring time ourselves. Thus it was that before sunset that even-

ing we allowed ourselves to be led through a small hole in the face of the lime bluff which opened out into a large cave which extended before and beneath us. The darkness was intense, but judging, by the smell that emanated from the bare bodies of our black friends, that they had squatted down on the smooth limestone floor, we did the same. The atmosphere was oppressively close and I could not help thinking that the natives were luckier than we were, in some respects, but we retained the white man's dignity and stuck (literally) to our clothes!

Suddenly the cave wall opposite us was brightly illuminated and on its surface appeared the shadow of a young *gin*. A moment later a second shadow, that of a young man, joined the first on the limestone wall screen, and, from the many well-selected words which the shadows evidently spoke, it was quite plain to us that the two were sweethearts. Then a third shadow suddenly stood out on the glistening wall, and we needed not to hear its apparent utterances to know it was a jealous rival of the second shadow. Promptly the two male forms became mixed up in violent motion, and from the sounds which apparently came from them—that of spears, *nullahs* (clubs) and boomerangs in action, and many grunts—we at once understood that they were fighting. The female shadow flitted around the two combatants while they struggled fiercely for her possession, and her screams of fear and delight re-echoed through the cavern as she watched the man of her choice gradually obtain the mastery of the other. Soon he had evidently given the death-blow, for, when the shadows stood out distinctly, the villain of the play was lying prostrate on the ground making gasping sounds suggestive of his approaching death, and the hero and heroine were locked in each other's arms. The figures flickered in the last position for a few moments, and then all was darkness as before, and the onlookers yelled their applause in a prolonged thunder of sound that shook the stalactites hanging from the roof.

We sat silently for a space after the performance was ended; we were thinking.

'Do you boys remember what I was saying to-day?' suddenly the Professor's voice sounded through the gloom around us.

'Not likely, old man, if you are thinking about starting again,' answered Big Sam, who was sometimes rude with the Professor.

'I do,' said Mac, lighting his pipe, 'you were saying that the niggers of Australia don't patronise the best tailors—'

'I do not think I referred to the matter of clothes at all, Mac,

but I would now point out to you that we have just witnessed the oldest, and yet the newest, drama in the history of human life. We are in a cinema house that probably was old when time, relatively speaking, was young. To-day we have seen evidence that the poor aboriginal of Australia had his wireless telegraphy and his talking pictures long before the white man dreamt of either——'

'How was this show worked?' I interrupted, and, hearing me, Hungry Billy touched me on the arm and then slid down with me to a lower level of the cave. His bare skin did not appear to suffer by our method of descent, but nevertheless I was thankful that I wore trousers.

We were now at the base of the ledge upon which we had been sitting, and I saw a fire round which the man who tended it and the three actors who had performed were squatted, smoking the tobacco we had given them. The two males and the young *gin* had simply enacted their time-old parts, and used their voices, in front of the fire, which had been fed with branches and grasses which gave off a more or less smokeless light, and their actions had been projected on the limestone wall of the cavern opposite both them and the ledge on which we had been sitting. I looked at the simpering black young heroine (at least, I think she was young) and felt glad that she had appeared on the screen only in silhouette form.

But I was more pleased when we were all outside the evil-smelling cave again and could breathe the cool pure air of North Australian night. We gave Hungry Billy a tin of jam, a packet of cigarettes and a used picture post-card of Sydney Harbour bridge which, somehow, was in Mac's possession. In return we got all the information regarding the country lying to the west that Hungry Billy and the most intelligent tribesmen could make us understand, and eventually got back to our own camp.

Next morning we set out on our ride farther west, our six pack-horses running gaily behind. Our journey was not difficult. It took us through a land of shadeless ghidgya, ti-tree and sandalwood scrub through which many other forms of vegetation that seemed to be of a creeping or parasitical nature were interspersed, and which was simply alive with members of the parrot family and other brilliantly hued birds. Crows were plentiful as were also gigantic lizards, but we did not see many snakes. We, rather easily, found some hidden 'native water-holes' (holes in rocky formations which catch and hold any chance rain water and are

covered with scrub by nomadic tribes of natives so as to protect their contents from kangaroos, reptiles, birds and evaporation), but, as the liquid contained in them was always more or less acidulated, we refrained from refilling our water-bags at them, and passed on.

On the fourth day we sighted a hill Hungry Billy had told us of, and riding over to it we saw that reefs of copper carbonate, silver-lead (galena) and molybdenite outcropped in tumble-down-dyke-like formation all over its slopes. There was wealth in those reefs beyond any doubt, but we could not avail ourselves of it as we could not stay to work anything in the mineral line without water. We thought we might come back to the reefs some day with a motor tractor which could carry a water-tank and some machinery, but meanwhile we could only mark the positions on our maps.

We struck a large dry creek on the western side of the hill, and, as the channel trended in the direction we were heading, rode along its northern bank for the next few days, filling our water-bags when we came to any water-hole which, owing to causes we did not linger to determine, had not yet dried up. There was a disconnected string of such pools at a southerly bend in the creek, and in the hard mud between them small perch-like fish 'flip-flopped' in constant procession. But we soon passed the part of the creek where 'walking fish' disported themselves, nor did we stay to study some living creatures that we had not seen before, such as an iguana as large as a crocodile that seemingly lived on flies, spider-like creatures that spread webs as coarse as fishing nets over bush foliage and apparently caught birds, living 'things' that stuck to tree-stems and swelled out into balls with the moisture extracted from them, and birds that lived upon the sand and would not fly unless our horses' hoofs were actually coming down upon them. We were looking for gold, and nothing else was of more than passing interest to us.

On the eighth day we came to a place where many native tracks converged. We fancied we could smell burning *pidgherie* (a wonderful pain-killing substance known only to the aborigines of Australia) and looked round for a native camp, not at all expecting the inhabitants to be friendly. But no camp was near, and there was nothing to show that any natives were in the vicinity. The scene was an ordinary sand plain, and, excepting for several black ironstone-like reefs which burst through the sand here and

there, it was bare of spear grass and all other forms of vegetation. We were puzzled. Clearly, the surface of the ground had been burnt off. A bush fire might have swept over the land and left it bare of vegetation while it blackened the outer surfaces of the reefs we saw, but a bush fire would have devastated the country for many miles around whereas only the small area before us had been affected. No, the burning-off had been the work of man.

'We are certainly not the first men to be in this country,' I said, 'and that odour of *pidgherie* says that the men before us were black.'

'It looks like it,' Big Sam agreed, 'but if so the blackfellows can't be far away now, or we shouldn't smell the *pidgherie*.'

'Well, it's near sunset now and I am tired,' put in the Professor. 'We have enough water in our bags for our supper and our horses can find a drop of mud somewhere in the bed of this creek for themselves. I move we camp right where we are. We can examine those reefs in the morning.'

In the present case none of us were inclined to disagree with the Professor's words, and in a few minutes we had unsaddled and hobbled our horses and had selected our sleeping-place in the creek bank. We sat and smoked, so as to ward off the myriads of night pests, until long after sundown, and then we ate our very frugal evening meal and lay back on our blankets to sleep. I had a strange dream—there must have been something that should not have been in the damper Mac baked for our supper!—in which Hollywood beauties and black-skinned females were mixed up sadly, but it ended abruptly when Big Sam rudely roused me from my slumbers and signed that I should join my companions already looking over the top of the creek bank. In a moment I was also gazing in wonderment at the scene on the plain in front.

A blazing ring of fires about a hundred feet in diameter was the chief sight, but outside this fiery circle in the shadows cast by the flickering flames a horde of naked young natives were mustered in close formation, and inside about a dozen fantastically garbed men, crudely disguised with grasses and feathers and skins as kangaroos, emus and lizards, were attending to the fires which composed the ring. A prominent figure among those inside was a being dressed with some degree of skill to represent a huge bird of some kind I had never heard of before, and which I therefore thought was legendary. This bird man soon separated himself from the other inside characters and took up a position beside a

hole we had previously noticed near one of the reefs, and in his right hand was what the natives call a *ghingi-ghingi* (an oblong piece of fluted wood which when swung round one's head at the end of a thong emits a peculiar wailing sound of varying cadence). Where the human beings outside and inside the ring of fires had sprung from we could not understand, unless they had been hidden in the long spear grass outside the burnt-off patch since before we had arrived.

'We've got ourselves into a tight corner, boys,' I remarked. 'Evidently the ground in front of us was burnt and cleared by those natives in readiness for the big *corroboree* Hungry Billy mentioned. This *corroboree* explains the converging tracks we saw and the smell of *pidgherie*, for, of course, the natives have been sleeping near the prepared ground for the last few days.'

'They don't know yet that four white men are camped in this dry creek,' said Big Sam. 'I reckon that if they did they'd have rushed us before this, and we wouldn't have had time for any long-range shooting——'

'Don't worry, Sam,' rejoined the Professor, 'they'll likely see us before long and you'll get all the revolver practice you want. The aborigines of most parts of Australia have a habit of killing uninvited people who witness their rites——'

'Shut up!' growled Mac, and at that moment the bird-like man in the ring, who obviously was a very important individual among his fellows, began swinging his *ghingi-ghingi*, and as its rhythmic waves of sound began to rise and fall in eerie wails the young aborigines outside the fiery circle formed into line and, following one another, marched into the flames and proceeded round the rim, shouting and shrieking in pretended mirth—or agony?

Round and round and through each fire the awful march continued, and the smell of scorching flesh mingled in the air with that of the pain-deadening *pidgherie* which we suspected each fire-walker was chewing. We had heard of the 'Fire-*corroboree*' before from friendly natives in other parts of Australia, but, as far as we were aware, no white man now living had ever witnessed one. We knew, however, that until a young native had walked the fires of the great *corroboree* he was not, by tribal law, a fully qualified man, and we knew also, from having been told, that the fire-procession would not stop until the Master of Ceremonies had ceased swinging his *ghingi-ghingi*.

'Watch that fellow in the big lizard-skin dress who is crawling up behind the *ghingi* man,' suddenly whispered Mac. 'He has a club in his hand and I am sure he means mischief. Oh!—that was a dirty trick!'

We gasped. The lizard man had clubbed the *ghingi* swinger from behind and the latter had fallen to the ground!

The effect was immediate. The moment the *ghingi-ghingi* had ceased wailing the fire-walkers burst from the ring with terrific shouts of joy. They seized spears and *nullahs*, and, still yelling ferociously, ran off into the moonlit desert. They had passed the great initiating test and were now men and could join in the council-meetings of any tribe in Australia. They could also marry, and doubtless each knew where his previously chosen *gin* was waiting. A blow on her head with his club would complete the marriage ceremony, but that blow must be dealt before witnesses.

The joys and sorrows of the newly made men were of no concern to us, however, but we felt very indignant at the treacherous attack on the *ghingi* wielder and would have rushed to his assistance had not it seemed that most of the other animal men inside the ring were already doing so. But we quickly saw that it was not to help him that they had gathered round his prostrate body. They unceremoniously threw him into the hole we had already noticed and piled scrub over him as if to bury him while possibly still alive, then shrieking and gesticulating like madmen they ran off after the young men.

'Come on, boys!' cried Mac, 'We can't stand that sort of game. That fellow was murdered——'

'We're with you, old man,' we answered in chorus, and next moment we had climbed over the bank and with ready revolvers were running towards the ring of dying fires. We leaped across the embers, swiftly reached the hole in which lay the bird man and began hauling out the scrub. Soon we had him on top of the ground; he was evidently still conscious and, to our intense surprise, did not seem to be much hurt.

'Let's carry him over to the creek, boys,' said the Professor, 'the niggers may be back at any moment and we can fight better behind the bank——'

'You needn't be scared of the niggers, mates,' spoke the man, sitting up, 'they are not bad fellows. The new men have got to come back and find me and raise me from the dead in the next act of the *corroboree*——'

'He's an English-speaking native!' yelled Big Sam, the first to recover from his astonishment on hearing the man's words.

'No; he is a white man,' I said, removing the bird head-dress and disclosing the man's face.

'Of course I am a white man and I'm mighty glad to see you fellows, though I don't know how you managed to track me down to this place?'

A flash of memory almost paralysed me: 'You are the much-talked-of lost prospector,' I cried. 'According to the story all over Australia you died beside a wonderful gold reef you had found?'

The man looked at me and a smile broke out on his hair-covered face. 'Well,' he said slowly, 'I am a lost prospector, sure, enough and you are standing beside the gold reef I found, but I don't think I'm quite dead yet. Maybe the niggers spread the yarn that I was in some of their smoke-talks——'

'The sides of this hole are rotten with veins of gold!' yelled Mac, thrusting before my eyes a piece of gold-studded quartz he had somehow dug out from the excavation while the man had been speaking.

'Yes,' said the resurrected prospector indifferently, 'I think this is one of the biggest gold discoveries ever made in Australia, but the whole country about here carries gold and maybe some of those black reefs that look like ironstone are richer in the darned stuff. All those reefs you see are made of gold-bearing white quartz, though they seem black on top of the ground; I reckon a good many *corroboree* fires have passed over them long ago and drawn any sulphur in them to the surface.'

'Then how did you happen to find this place?' I asked, as we assisted our new friend over to the creek.

'I'm not really the finder, mate. You see when I first struck this bit of the country I was looking for water more than for anything else, and the night I camped near here I didn't hobble my two horses, thinking they might find water somewhere if they were free in the feet. Maybe they did, but I couldn't find *them* next morning, and I lost their tracks when trying to follow them up. I had no water and the sun burned into my bones as I wandered about and by and by a fever came over me and I think I collapsed beside that hole you saw. I know now, though, that niggers had made that hole maybe hundreds of years ago for use in their *corroborees*, and that tribes still keep coming to it because the *gins* like to wear the yellow stuff found in it—of course it is the gold shed

from the reef beside it that they are getting, but they don't concern themselves about where it comes from.' The lost prospector's words trailed off into silence and he appeared to be listening to the far-off shouts of the natives.

'But your narrative really left off when you laid yourself down to die at that hole,' the Professor reminded the man, 'what happened after that?'

'Oh, I had forgotten that,' murmured the abstracted one, recollecting himself. 'A tribe of wandering natives came to the hole for gold that night and found me still living. They thought I was *kaditcha* or a magic of some kind worth having in their hands, so they nursed me back to myself again and I became one of them. I did my best to keep up the idea that I was *kaditcha* for it made me important among them, and one day when the tribe was having a fight with another tribe that came here I unconsciously proved that I was—with my rifle! I don't think I did much damage to the other fellows, but the rifle made a noise and the other fellows ran. Shortly after that the old Chief of my people died, and, as I was now thought to be a friendly *kaditcha*, I was made a sort of Chief in his stead. That's all my story. I could not leave the tribe, for I knew I would peg out without water, and the people were so careful of me that they hid me when any flying machine, or *kaditcha* noise-making bird as they called such, chanced to come anywhere around—'

'That reminds me,' broke in the Professor. 'Has any air machine been around here within the last fortnight?'

'Yes; one came down in that patch of tall scrub a mile or so beyond this creek. The natives were frightened and wouldn't go near it for anything. They thought it was a *kaditcha* bird come for me and they reckoned this *corroboree* could never be completed if it got me in its clutches. Anyhow there can't be much left of the man who crashed in that machine. The crows have been busy over there ever since and *they* don't mind whether a man is *kaditcha* or not.'

'We'll get our horses and ride over now and bury his bones,' said the Professor in the silence which followed the lost prospector's words. 'We'll be safe there from the natives at any rate. . . .'

We were. When our sad duty was performed we rode away towards civilisation, the lost prospector accompanying us on one of our pack-horses. Thus it is more than probable that the great

corroboree was never finished and that the youths who had become men at the fire-test are still wondering as to the fate of their Chief. They know that he was safely placed in the prepared hole by their elders and that on their return it was their age-old duty to raise him. They had failed in that duty because he was not there, and doubtless the noise-making bird that had come down in the vicinity was responsible for that fact!

They may think differently some day, however, when the lost Chief returns with four companions and a strange noise-making machine on four wheels carrying a water-tank.

WILLOWS.

WILLOWS are what I love ;
They compass me
In a green calm chequered with slanting beams ;
They make small, squat cathedrals of quiet peace
Leaning over slow streams
Reposefully ;
They are the height of a man's soul,
Small, low, and near the earth,
But lovable ;
And wrens love them also, leaping from twig to twig,
And the sun caresses their leaves
Blushing them golden and bronze.

I have always seen
Each moment of quiet and peace in this clamorous life
As a moment of green—
An oasis of willow.

FRANK EYRE.

INKY WOOING.

BY JOHN LAMBOURNE.

[*Horace, a terrier owned by Charles Wilburton, introduces his master to Jane Whittle by means of a mêlée with her Aberdeens, Sealyhams and Pekes. Jane also owns Mogul, a prize mastiff, is the daughter of an apple-expert, and is engaged to Hubert Chipping, a writer. Charles is hardly a success with Mr. Whittle, but still decides to win Jane. To this end he takes a course in writing under Mr. George Mundon, an ex-dog lifter from America, whose former ally, Ely Roost, yearns for Mogul. Charles goes to discuss literature with Mr. Mundon.*

Mr. Mundon meets Mr. Whittle and falls to temptation. He goes to stay with Mr. Whittle and talks apples. Charles struggles with his writing and decides to win Jane by recovering the stolen mastiff. But Hubert gains the credit for Mogul's restoration. Charles tries to steal Jane's Sealyham in order to restore it. All the dogs get loose and the result is disaster. Horace takes a hand, whilst Ely falls for Dorothy, the Whittles' servant.]

CHAPTER XIX.

OF HOW JANE LOST A LOVER.

WITH the exception of an occasional novelette Dorothy was not an avid reader. She did, however, dip into a newspaper from time to time—not the Whittles' newspaper, this she considered tripe, but a newspaper the cook got from the gardener who got it to follow the racing news. It was a newspaper of a fruitier vintage altogether than the Whittles' newspaper, and in it Dorothy found the type of news that suited her exacting taste.

Turning over the pages one evening and sifting the wheat from the chaff; in other words, picking out the divorce court news and the murders, Dorothy was struck by the photograph of a girl. She had just come to the end of a column headed :

JEALOUS HUSBAND FINDS WIFE IN LOVER'S ARMS.

SHOCKING REVELATIONS.

WIFE'S AMAZING STORY.

ASTOUNDING CONFESSION.

and was about to turn the page in search of further mental nourishment when—as we say—the photograph caught her eye. It seemed

to her (and she was an expert on these matters) the photograph of a typical murderess. Reading, however, she found the only crime the woman had committed was writing books and articles. In fact, she was looking at the self-same advertisement of Mr. Mundon's that Charles had seen, and the face was that of the servant girl who had been unable to write a single grammatical sentence—and still, to judge from her letter, suffered from the same handicap . . .

I was a servant girl . . .

Dorothy read on. Apparently this hideous servant girl had gone to Mr. Mundon and he had advised her to take his course. After the course Editors had fought for her manuscripts like dogs for a bone. Dorothy was much impressed. If this servant girl had done it, why not she? She possessed in high degrees the qualities of illiteracy that had been so valuable a basis for the other's brilliant career. Like her, she wrote only with the greatest difficulty, she knew no grammar, she could not spell, and the mysteries of punctuation were as the mysteries of free masonry to a rabbit. She wrote to Mr. Mundon on the Whittles' notepaper.

By return of post came the demand for a trial essay.

Dorothy's writing since leaving school had been confined to applications to manufacturers of face cream for free samples. She found essay-writing difficult. She could get privacy in her bedroom but preferred to write in the kitchen where she could ask cook how to spell words. It was a case of the blind leading the blind, but in a week the essay was finished and posted to Mr. Mundon. It was an inky essay. There *are* writers, and Dorothy knew it, who can write without smudging ink everywhere—just as there are people who can keep three balls in the air at once or balance an umbrella on their noses—but she was not one of them. The ink ran upwards to her hands and face, and downwards on to the paper in pools and blots. She wrote on 'The Cinema' and described the plots of films she had seen at the Bijou. It took her, as we say, a week. Fluent of tongue she had a halting pen. Also at rare moments of inspiration, when a description of the hero was under way, or when the spelling of a word would come home to her, the bell would generally ring. To do her justice, she rarely answered it until it had rung half a dozen times, but it put her off.

A comment on her essay came by return post.

DEAR MADAM [it ran],—

We have read your essay entitled 'The Cinema.' For a first essay this shows great promise. There is a latent strength which, developed, might lead to great things. At present the style is undisciplined and the subject is presented in a way that, while it leaves much to be desired, could, with training, be made to appeal strongly to modern editors. In your particular case, therefore, we shall have pleasure in enrolling you as a member of the school at the usual fee of £7 7s. for the five lessons.

(Signed) GEORGE MUNDON,
Metropolitan School of Writing.

Though not understanding all of it, this letter wildly excited Dorothy. The thing was as good as done. She would be a noted authoress just like ugly-face. She saw her own photograph in the paper with Mr. Mundon's eloquent phrasing, 'Was Servant Girl. Now Noted Authoress.' She saw worried-looking editors knocking at the front door. 'Would you wish to see Mr. Whittle, sir?' 'Whittle? Who's Whittle? No, we want to see Miss Dorothy Danby, the noted authoress.' They would hold contracts in one hand and fountain-pens in the other. There would be squabbles and fights. Editor would seize editor. Tangled knots of editors would roll kicking and biting on the door-step. And no editor would get her articles unless he put up a good show. The only obstacle to the realisation of these wonderful dreams was the fee of seven guineas. Sevenpence-halfpenny was all she possessed, and her wages for some time hence were mortgaged for clothes.

But still. Mr. Mundon was so enthusiastic about her chances; so impressed with her work, that perhaps he would let her take the course for nothing and pay him later out of the huge sums she made by writing.

She wrote and suggested this arrangement.

Some might have supposed that her trouble would have failed to touch a responsive chord in Mr. Mundon's heart. Such would not have known Mr. Mundon. That big-hearted man was reluctant that the girl should forgo her chance—and still more reluctant that he himself should forgo seven guineas if there was any possibility of getting it. The name, address, and spelling told him this was the Whittles' maid; the self-same dame who had handed Ely his portion. His mind got busy. He travelled

back over the past, and before long he saw the solution of both their problems.

Ask Ely [he wrote to her] how Hubert Chipping got that dog Mogul back. Maybe Hubert will give you the money for the course to keep your mouth shut.

Dorothy was astounded. How did *he* know about Ely and Mogul. It just showed how clever literary people were. The next morning when Ely put in his appearance he was surprised to be cordially invited into the kitchen with the words: 'Here you! I want to speak to you.'

The cook was out, and Ely left his beloved half an hour later with a feeling of pity for Hubert in his heart. Hubert, he considered, had as much hope of saving his seven guineas as a hen has of saving its chickens when a fox gets in the run.

When Hubert heard that Mr. Whittle's maid had called to see him he felt no misgivings. She had come, he thought, with some message from her mistress. He met her in the hall. 'Well, Dorothy.' The tone was complaisant and patronising.

'I'd like to see you private, sir.'

Hubert raised his eyebrows. 'Come into my study, then,' he said, smiling, after a moment's pause.

They went into the study.

'It's like this, sir,' said Dorothy, sitting down, 'my young fellow (Ely had been promoted to fiancéship for present purposes) has been telling me about that dog. I found out before and then I spoke to him and then he told me.'

'Dog? What dog?'

'Mogul, sir.'

'Mogul—oh! What about Mogul?' Mogul, thought Hubert, was *always* popping up. Jane mentioned him whenever they met. But if Jane's maid was going to start the same game the thing must be nipped in the bud. He could stand it from Jane—he had to—but not from her servants.

'You remember bringing him back?' said Dorothy.

The very words Jane was always using! Hubert swallowed angrily. 'Look here!' he said, 'if you've got business with me, let me know it. If not, I'm busy.'

'This young fellow of mine is called Ely—Ely Roost.'

'My dear girl! I don't care if he is called Blasted Idiot. What do you want here?'

Dorothy was enjoying herself. The mouse did not know yet that the cat had got it. It would be amusing when it did. 'It was him, sir,' she said, 'who found Mogul.'

More Mogul! 'Well?' he snarled.

'You took it from him.'

'Took it from him! You mean I stole it?'

'No, I mean you gave him fifteen quid for it.'

'I gave fif— Oh!' Hubert began to see things as through a glass darkly. 'My dear girl!' he said again, but it was a very different 'My dear girl!' from the other one. A note of uneasiness and remonstrance had crept in. The mouse was feeling that there was a cat somewhere about. 'My dear girl!' he repeated. 'This is nonsense.'

'In which case, sir, you calls my young man a liar?'

'Not exactly a liar, Dorothy—not, that is to say, a liar exactly.'

'In which case, sir, I must tell my mistress. Because you see, sir, if my young man has told me lies I want to know.'

Not very lucid, perhaps, but lucid enough for Hubert—at least, the part about telling her mistress. He put on a strained, almost a ghastly smile. 'Now look here—er—Dorothy, you mustn't worry Miss Whittle with a thing like this. If I paid the man the amount of the reward—and I remember now that I did—I did it to save her trouble. That's all.'

But Dorothy had not listened behind closed doors for nothing. There had been many discussions at Bransby Towers about the recovery of Mogul. 'Then, sir,' she said, 'you didn't track the dog down like what Sherlock Holmes did the racehorse?'

Hubert's grin became definitely of the ghastly variety. 'That was just a joke, Dorothy.'

'Then I hope my mistress treats it as such, sir.'

Hubert was seeing much more clearly now. He fumbled in his pocket and brought out some notes. He separated one for ten shillings from its fellows. 'Now, Dorothy,' with a note of brisk cheerfulness, 'off you go like a good girl, and here's ten shillings to buy yourself a hat or a coat or something.'

Dorothy looked at it and smiled. 'Thank you, sir, but what I want is seven guineas to buy myself a writing lesson.'

'Seven guineas!' croaked Hubert.

'If you please.'

'Do you realise, my good woman, that this is blackmail?'

Dorothy smirked and looked downwards. What she knew about

blackmail she had learnt from the films. It was a thing done by exceedingly beautiful women, assisted by men like Ely Roost. Lilian Adele had done it in 'The Woman in Black,' and Gloria Lamentière in 'The Girl in the Bedroom.' And here she was apparently doing it herself. Little had she thought when she saw those films that one day she, Dorothy, would also be a blackmailer. Her heart warmed towards Ely. Life had been a fuller, nobler thing since she had met him. Hers was entirely a film-fed mind and she looked on life from film angles. It is an angle that is in a fair way to teach the bulk of our population that criminals are heroes and that—but we are disobeying rule 16A which has things to say about moralising.

'Do you realise,' said Hubert, 'that you can be *arrested* for this?'

'Very well, sir,' said Dorothy. After all, she *preferred* the mouse to struggle.

Hubert was no diplomat. He was a thinker. He was thinking now and what he was thinking was that he and seven guineas were shortly to part company. He had paid fifteen pounds to get Mogul back and the money would be completely wasted if his fiancée ever came to hear about it. He had thought the investment gilt-edged, but the shares, apparently, had not been fully paid. The sum of thousands was at stake. Was all to be jeopardised for the sake of seven guineas?

Nevertheless, he blustered a little longer.

As well bluster against the east wind as against a girl who sees herself in print. So in the end he paid.

Dorothy was not accustomed at any time to kill herself with work and for several days the fact that she was doing next to none at all passed unnoticed. What first struck her employers was her inky appearance when called. Modern maids do not take kindly to criticisms of their looks, and nothing was said at first. Meanwhile Dorothy had completed her first lesson and received the Metropolitan School of Writing's criticism on the ink-bespattered effort. The criticism was, on the whole, flattering, for the writing school never read the essays—and could hardly have read Dorothy's if they had wanted to—but liked to keep their students in a good temper until the course was finished. Her second essay, they said, showed great improvement over the first. So Dorothy went on with renewed vigour.

Meanwhile the Whittle household was growing restive, and after an interview with the cook, who told her all she knew, Jane summoned Dorothy one morning into the dining-room.

'Dorothy,' she said, 'I want to know why your face is always inky and why you have ceased to do any work whatever in this house?'

'My face inky!' cried Dorothy, stung by the reproach.

'And why you have ceased to work. The rooms are never dusted and Cook tells me she has to clean the pans and wash up herself.'

Dorothy considered. 'Well, mum,' she said at length, 'I'm writing.'

'So Cook told me. What are you writing?'

'I'm going to be an author, mum, and I'm taking a course.'

Jane stared at her aghast. '*You*, Dorothy! This is absurd! You could never become an author.'

'Indeed, mum!' Jane had gone too far. Hint to an author—still more a would-be author—that he or she is anything short of stupendous and the author is up in arms immediately. A flush was on the insulted Dorothy's face. '*Indeed*, mum!' she repeated; 'then let me tell you that h'others have different opinions to you. I belong to a school, and I'd like you, mum, if you would be so kind, to read what *they* say about my writing and about whether I could be h'an h'author.' Dorothy when on her dignity was liberal with her aspirates.

'I *would* rather like to see them,' said Jane, smiling. 'I'd like to see some of your work, too.'

Dorothy had already fled upstairs. She returned with a package containing the letters from the Metropolitan School of Writing. Her face was still flushed, but it was a flush now more of pride than anger. Only Cook had seen these precious comments, and she was an ignorant, illiterate creature who could hardly spell sufficiently to be of any assistance.

'Thank you, Dorothy?' said Jane, taking the bundle of letters and selecting one.

It was a great moment for Dorothy. Her unsuspecting mistress was about to learn that she had a famous future authoress as a servant. She looked at the carpet and almost simpered.

Jane re-read the letter.

'*Ask Ely how Hubert Chipping got that dog Mogul back.*

Maybe Hubert will give you the money for the course to keep your mouth shut.'

Dorothy raised her eyes from the floor to read Jane's admiration and astonishment. She read the latter—enough to satisfy even her exacting requirements. She glanced over her shoulder to see which particular letter it was that had so impressed her mistress, gasped, and snatched it away.

'Not that one, mum.'

'I daresay, Dorothy, but I've read it. What is this about Hubert Chipping and Mogul?'

'Nothing, mum.'

'Did you get your seven guineas from him?'

'Yes—no, mum.' For once in her life Dorothy was in a dither.

'I want an explanation, Dorothy.'

'It was the other letters I meant you to read, mum,' said Dorothy, giving the explanation demanded. 'That one's private.'

But Jane could be a determined young woman. Within ten minutes she was in possession of the facts and within another minute she had telephoned to Hubert arranging an immediate interview.

She put down the receiver with the expression some jungle beast might wear when it just fixed a date with a spring lamb.

Jane, as she waited for Hubert, told herself that this was the darkest hour of her life. The lover she had trusted, revered, had been found unworthy. Her idol was made of clay. Sorrow (she told herself) had marked her for its own. Then why, she wondered, did she feel so cheerful? Why was it so difficult to keep from humming a song of the *tra-la-la* variety? In all probability she was going to lose her lover. In another quarter of an hour or so, after a possibly stormy scene, he would pass out of her life for ever, *tra-la-la*.

'Mr. Chipping's come, mam.'

The Cook, egged on by Dorothy, had answered Hubert's ring.

'Oh. Show him in.'

In another moment Hubert stood in the doorway, wagging his eyebrows worriedly. 'Well, Jane?'

It was a habit of his to say, 'Well, Jane,' in a gloomy manner whenever they met.

With immense difficulty Jane contrived to make her face show

the sorrow she was feeling. She said sternly to herself, 'I will not hum.'

'Oh, Hubert,' she said, 'I asked you to come and see me because of something I've just heard. You weren't busy, were you?'

'I was writing, dear. What is it you've just heard?'

'It was about Mogul.'

Hubert groaned. Mogul again! Would that hell-hound ever manage to keep out of the conversation?

'Dorothy has just told me that it was her fiancé who found Mogul and that you gave him the reward so that you could pretend you'd tracked him down yourself.'

'She told you that, did she?'

'She told me that.'

'Oh.'

'I telephoned to you so that I might ask you if it was true. Is it true?'

Hubert considered. He was a very truthful man except when the truth was inconvenient. It was inconvenient now, but the question was, how much did she really know? Could he get away with it? Was it safe?

Jane noticed his hesitation and judged him accordingly. 'You can see Mr. Roost if you like. He's the man who has made the accusation.'

'And pocketed the fifteen quid!' said Hubert bitterly.

'Then you admit it,' said Jane sorrowfully, a great weight rolling off her mind.

'My dear girl.' Hubert paused to sniff and move his eyebrows. 'My dear girl, if I did it I did it to save you trouble and bother and, incidentally, expense.'

'The fifteen pounds will be returned to you. And after this, of course,' putting on her best 'more in sorrow than in anger' tone, 'we can no longer be engaged. You must take your ring back and I will return you the money you so kindly advanced for the reward—*tra-la*.'

'For the reward what?'

'Nothing.'

'Now look here, Jane!' He stared at her fishily. 'This is absurd. You can't mean to tell me you're going to break off our engagement for a little thing like that.'

'I don't count it little. All that talk about Sherlock Holmes and trackings and thieves' lairs! And you must have been ashamed

of it yourself or you wouldn't have paid Dorothy seven guineas to keep her mouth shut.'

'She told you that, did she? She didn't by any chance tell you she'd let herself in for blackmail?'

'That's between you and her, Hubert.'

'It jolly well is! But, seriously, Jane, you can't break our engagement, you know. The thing's—well, it's absolutely nothing.'

'I don't agree. I thought you great and clever; now I know you to be mean and little.' She repeated this to herself, it sounded so good.

Visions of angry Isaacs, Pauls and Kreusteins flashed before Hubert's mind. 'But look here,' he said, 'you can't do it! You can't——' But the reasons that were so convincing to him would not, he felt, commend themselves to Jane.

'I could never marry a man who could deceive me like that. We can be friends, of course.'

Friends! Hubert gave a hollow laugh. A lot of good *that* would do him! A lot of balm that would be to Isaac, Paul and Kreustein!

'I expect you'll think better of this later on,' he said hopefully.

'I don't think so. Here's your ring. Good-bye.'

He took the ring and balanced it on his palm. He looked at her doubtfully.

'I have a book coming out soon.'

'Oh.'

'And shortly I expect to have several articles published.'

'Really!'

Evidently nothing doing.

He opened the door. 'Good-bye,' he said.

'Tra-la,' said Jane thoughtlessly.

CHAPTER XX.

OF HOW CHARLES TALKED BUSINESS.

As we have said before, this is not a psychological work. But a little psychology does intrude now and then. It does now. We wish to explain the states of mind of the two chief characters in our history. We have Charles reconciled, as he thinks, to a love-

less life. We have Jane, very much in the same boat: for of her two admirers one has proved to be a thief and a dastard and the other has been sacked, officially for untruthfulness, actually for sniffing and raising his eyebrows up and down. Both realise that for them life is practically over and what remains is but the dregs.

And now we come to the psychology. When two young people get to feel like this, things happen. They see a dreary road stretching before them to the grave—but they do not tread it. Be prepared, therefore, for swift events. Do not grumble at the inconsistencies of these two. It is all explained by the magic word, psychology.

'Look here, Mundon,' said Charles, entering the office without knocking, 'what about that book? Is it ready yet?'

'No, son. The printers was writing me yesterday. They want to know where to send the proofs.'

'Proofs. I don't want any proofs. I told you, I want the book published straight away. Tell them to get on with the printing and not waste time with proofs. Tell them to print it just as I wrote it.'

'They say you wrote it kind of funny.'

'I did not!'

'They say some of the stuff don' make sense.'

'You read it?'

'Sure.'

'You found it all right—or said you did.'

'Sure I did. And I foun' plenty sense in it.'

'Then what's their trouble?'

'Maybe they don't understand it proper.'

'Well then, do what I say—tell them to print it as I wrote it.'

'They say there's no paragraphs and the spelling's funny.'

'What rot!'

'Sure.'

'Where *do* you put paragraphs?'

'Well . . . some folks puts them in one place and some in another.'

'Then it doesn't matter. Tell them to stick them in at more or less regular intervals. And the spelling—you found it all right.'

'Sure. For a Britisher, son, you spells good, I'll tell the world. Mind, I ain't foun' a Britisher yet can spell worth a cent., but yours is better'n most and you can quote me as having said it. Yes, *sir*.'

'Of course you spell a bit differently in America. There was

one word that worried me a bit in my novel, I admit. How do you spell "psychology"?'

'Psychology, son?'

'Yes.'

'That's sure a twister. You see it's one of them words we spell different in the States.'

'There's a "p" in it, isn't there?'

'Sure Mike. You won't get far with that word, boy, without a "p." But way to get the British spelling is to look in a dictionary.'

'I did, but it didn't seem to give it. But still, I suppose my book will be published in America later on?'

'I guess so. Pay the right—'

'Then it doesn't matter if the spelling's a bit mixed—a bit English and a bit American.'

'Course not. You'll please both parties.'

'Then tell the printers to put down the words as I spelt them.'

'O.K. They say the punctuation's bad.'

'They're just making trouble.'

'I guess so.'

'Well then, look here—I paid to have the bally book published and I want it published straight away without any more nonsense. You tell them that.'

'I will, son. I know you want to get it quick to give your dame.'

Charles laughed bitterly. 'That,' he said, 'is off. I told you before. You never remember anything for more than five minutes, Mundon.'

'Off!'

Americans are sentimental and Mr. Mundon was more sentimental than most. That plug-ugly exterior concealed a romantic soul. Also, whatever his faults—and in the opinion of the Chicago police they were many—he stood by his friends, and he had admitted Charles to that doubtful standing. Charles loved a 'dame' and he must be helped to win her, especially since he (Mr. Mundon) had had private information that this same dame was contemplating a most undesirable alliance with a crook. What this young man wanted was gall. When it came to dames, Britishers were all the same—they were scared of them. How in heck they ever got married at all the way they went about things Mr. Mundon could not fathom. He presumed it must be through the agency of the

dame herself. So he spoke very earnestly to Charles. 'Now see here,' he said, 'you got to go about this right. This piece of yours *knows* you took that tyke to get in with her. She's kidding you, son. She's playing you for a sucker and you're falling for it. With dames you want to get right at it. In Chicago, now, guys go straight to the point and ask a dame what colour she wants for the bridesmaids as soon as they've finished being inter-dooed. You go and tell your girl in plain English how you feel and ask her to fix a date for the rice party. She'll see you're talking then.'

'I told her the truth once. She wouldn't believe me. I shan't mention it again.'

'You don't want mention it again. All you needs mention is to ask her marry you. She'll understand that.'

'You forget the other man.'

'Forget nothing. It's the other fellow you want to cut out. How in heck you going do that unless you talk business?'

Charles shook his head and smiled. 'You mean well, Mundon,' he said, 'but it's all over. I shall never see her again.'

There was a knock at the door followed by Mr. Mundon's invariable 'Come right in,' and a moment later Charles was standing gaping like a codfish at Miss Whittle.

Mr. Mundon rose. 'Why, Miss Whittle! It's real kind of you to call. And how's your pa? Sit down.'

Jane ignored him. She was staring at Charles. 'I suppose I might have expected to have found *you* here,' she said at length. She turned to Mr. Mundon. 'I've come for an explanation.'

'Shoot, sister.'

'Why did you steal my dog?'

Mr. Mundon stared at her.

'Shall I go?' asked Charles.

'No,' said Jane. 'I think you had better stay. For all I know you are in it too.'

'Quite,' said Charles, sitting down on the window-ledge and preparing to enjoy himself.

'Who tole you I steal your dog?' asked Mr. Mundon.

'Ely has told us everything.'

'Ely has!'

Jane nodded.

'Can you beat it!'

'No,' said Jane, 'I hardly think you can.'

'And Ely, that was the dumbest crook in the States! Who'd he tell?'

'He told our maid, Dorothy.'

Mr. Mundon groaned. 'Would you believe it! It's this Romeo stuff done it. When a feller gets that way there's no saying. Ely spilling the chicory! *Ely!*'

'Don't blame Ely,' said Jane; 'blame yourself. It all came out over that letter you wrote to Dorothy.'

'Which letter, sister?'

'The letter telling her that if she wanted to get seven guineas for her writ—'

'Oh, that one.'

'Yes, that one.'

'I get you.'

'I'm glad.'

'Anyway,' said Mr. Mundon, looking on the bright side, 'it's as well you see that letter and gets puts wise to that fellow Hubert. He's a twister. There's things I could tell you about him. Maybe you don't know he's in a coc—'

'Thanks,' interrupted Jane, 'but before we discuss other people's shortcomings, we'll get on with yours.'

'Sure.'

'What I propose to do now is to call in the police.'

Mr. Mundon flinched. 'The police!'

'Of course,' said Jane with a tinkling laugh.

'What you want them fellers for?' The tone was that of a man mystified by curious tastes.

'To arrest the men who stole Mogul.'

'Me and Ely?'

'You and Ely, if not'—with a side glance at Charles—'others.'

Mr. Mundon thought the matter over for some little time, and Charles perceived that he regained confidence.

'I should pass up on that,' he said.

'What do you mean?'

'You don't want to call on that hand. It's like this—you never see Ely bring that dog back. The only witness on your side's Hubert. If he lets out he paid that money so as to make you sweet on him, he looks a fool. Maybe he'll kick.' (Jane felt sure he'd kick.) 'But, sister, when it comes to kicking he won't beat Ely. When Ely sees cops around he loses his head. He's acting docile now because of this kitchen Jane of yours, but put him in

a court and a bucking steer won't be in it. He'll swear to beat the book he never see Mogul and wouldn't reckernise him if served up in aspic.'

'As a matter of fact,' said Jane, 'I haven't decided yet whether to call in the police or not. But I think it was the meanest thing I ever heard of, your coming to the house and sleeping there and then stealing our dog.'

'I can now explain,' broke in Charles, 'why I told you I had nearly been able to get Mogul back. You see, when I heard that Mundon here had slept at your place I remembered he'd once told me he used to steal dogs for a living.'

'I was soaked,' said Mr. Mundon in self-justification.

'So I went to him and told him he must give Mogul back—only to hear it had already been returned.'

'And then you'd have pretended, I suppose, that you'd tracked him down to the thieves' lair in some perfectly marvellous way just like Sherlock Holmes?'

'Yes,' said Charles.

'Then you're no better than Hubert—and I told him I never wanted to see him again.'

'You did!' The words were almost a shout.

Jane turned to Mr. Mundon. 'I'm waiting for your explanation.'

'Well . . . when I met your pa and see how easy it'd be to—'

'How did you meet him?'

'I meets him in the Royal Hotel and talks apples.'

'You know nothing of apples.'

'I know enough to last me a plenty time,' said Mr. Mundon feelingly.

'How did you know he was keen on apples?'

Mr. Mundon looked at Charles. 'Well,' he said at length, 'everyone knows Whittle's—thing-a-my . . . I forget its darned name.'

Jane was trying hard not to smile at the man's frank disclosures.

'Have I your assurance,' she asked primly, 'that you will steal no more dogs?'

'Me? Surely. I only helped Ely that onct.'

'Well . . .' said Jane, 'of course the seven guineas must be returned to Mr. Chipping.'

'Returned!'

'Returned. And you must write to Dorothy telling her you have done so.'

'Have a heart!'

'Also——'

'What about that girl's lessons?'

'I hope you cancel them. She may do some work for us then.'

'And ruin her career?'

'It will be ruined if she doesn't stop writing. Also the fifteen pounds reward must be refunded to Mr. Chipping.'

'Gee!' said the stunned Mr. Mundon. 'Ain't women fierce!'

'You say,' continued Jane, 'that you no longer steal dogs?'

'Yeh.'

'Then what'—pointing at Charles—'is this notorious dog thief doing in your office?'

'Notorious dog thief!' echoed Mr. Mundon in horror, appalled at this slur on his old profession. 'Him! He couldn't lift a rag one out of a baby's pram.'

'Yet he tried to steal mine.'

'You get it right. He tries to steal the one while Ely waits outside with the auto and the gloop goes and lets them all out, and Ely sees 'em and beats it.'

'How mean!' said Jane involuntarily. 'I mean,' she corrected herself hastily, 'how mean to try and steal a dog.'

'He was figuring to give it back.'

'Why?'

'To kid you he had brains and put himself in the running.'

'Then I think he's the meanest creature that ever lived!'

'Say, sister!' remonstrated Mr. Mundon.

'It's just what Hubert did—only worse.'

'It's nothing,' said Mr. Mundon. 'There's fellows in the States'd think nix of bumping off a dozen guys to get in good with their dame. Stealing a dog ain't nothing.'

'You see,' said Charles, 'I wanted to have the same chance that Hubert had—and I knew how Hubert had got Mogul back.'

'What you did was infinitely worse. You actually tried to *steal* it!'

'Think of the fellows in the States and what *they* do for the sake of a dame.'

'We're not in the States. And you treat it all as if it were a joke. You have done all the time. If you hadn't laughed and scoffed about it and made out you stole dogs for a living I'd——'

Charles jumped to his feet. 'Jane,' he interrupted, 'I told you the truth at first and you wouldn't believe me—or pretended

not to. You know when Hubert got Mogul back I thought you might marry him straight away and I couldn't bear the thought. You see, I love you, Jane.'

'At-a-boy!' said Mr. Mundon.

Jane went crimson. 'This,' she said stiffly, 'is no place to go into things like that.'

'I am prepared,' said Charles with great earnestness, 'to go into them very fully in any other place you like. Jane, do you forgive me? Can I see you again?'

'I'll have to think about it.'

'Then can I come and see you when you've thought about it?'

'I don't know.'

'That means "yes," boy,' said Mr. Mundon.

'It does *not* mean yes,' said Jane.

'Don't take any notice of him,' said Charles. 'He comes from Chicago where guys go straight to the point and ask dames what colour they want for the bridesmaids. By the way, what colour do *you* want for the bridesmaids?'

'At-a-baby!' murmured Mr. Mundon.

Jane went to the door and opened it. She turned round scornfully. 'Good morning,' she said, and was gone.

The two stared at the closed door; then Charles came to his senses and rushed after her. He caught her up at the bottom of the stairs.

'Jane,' he said, 'don't be angry.'

'I'm not. I merely think you're a fool.'

'I know I am. But not always. Sometimes I can be serious—almost as serious as Hubert.'

She laughed.

'Very well,' he said; 'then I shall prove it to you. I shall come up to Bucks and prove to you that I can be as serious and brainy as Hubert. I have to run up in any case to apologise to you about the dog.'

'But you've already apologised.'

'You haven't thought about it yet. I'll come in about a week.'

'Well, don't bring Horace,' she said as she moved off.

'Mundon,' said Charles, dashing back into the office, 'that book's got to be ready in a week. Tell the printers.'

'All right, son. But what about them queries?'

'Never mind the queries. Tell them it's a matter of life and death.'

CHAPTER XXI.

OF HOW CHARLES ALTERED HIS PROGRAMME.

Events, it will be seen, are moving to a climax: psychology has done its work; the virtuous Jane, after indignantly dismissing Hubert for being deceitful, is relenting towards Charles who has been ten times more so. The fact is—and however regrettable it may be, it must be faced—girls do not always class righteousness as the one indispensable quality in young men. Indeed—we have it on good authority—the completely virtuous man has little or no chance with them. Charles therefore, had he but known it, need not have felt as nervous as he did when, a week later, he sat in the train bound once more for Bucks.

Horace he had left behind and this served to accentuate his uneasiness. For there was about that small, alleged fox-terrier an air of swaggering bravado that somehow affected Charles with a like spirit.

On the carriage seat close by him was a small brown-paper parcel which he fingered lovingly from time to time. We are not going to divulge the nature of its contents, for that is to be the climax of our story, but we may say that he had been waiting a week for it and that it had only arrived that morning.

He took his usual rooms at the 'Blue Boar Inn.' Monkey Nut, the Irish terrier, he learnt, having grown to Great Dane proportions and developed a fondness for poultry, had been kindly given to a farmer friend living a considerable distance away.

It was Charles's intention to call on Jane formally, apologise for stealing her dog and for his subsequent behaviour and for anything else that she wished him to apologise for—it was all one to Charles—then gradually to get relationships back on their former footing and, after say a fortnight's intensive spade-work, propose. This was following the lines of what is generally considered the best method. The *modus operandi* in dealing with women is to appear on the skyline, get gradually nearer, and then dig oneself in. Once dug in, one is comparatively safe; the girl soon takes one for granted, and providing one does not venture too far at a time the rest is plain sailing. Canary fanciers adopt this plan in persuading lady canaries to espouse cocks of their (the fanciers') choosing. The cock is put in another cage where the lady can see him but need take no notice of him. Gradually she accepts him as a feature of the landscape and when he is finally put into her cage she does not misuse him but merely says snappishly, 'Come,

don't sit there. Here is hay and moss: get busy with the nest and stop singing.'

Charles did call on Jane and did apologise over the matter of the dog, but instead of proposing a fortnight later he proposed that same afternoon. As we have said before, a man can always tell—and far better than a woman because a woman is so much less bashful. The ground had been well prepared for him. Hubert Chipping had called an hour or so before he arrived and had been at his gloomiest. He had reproached Jane for jilting him and suggested that the past should be forgotten. Jane had thoroughly agreed but suggested that the past would be forgotten much quicker if she never saw him again. Then Hubert had played his trump card and presented her with a handsomely bound copy of his new book, *Cankerous Minds*.

To her own surprise it did not move her. 'Oh,' she said, 'I didn't know you'd published another.'

'Oh, yes,' said Hubert, 'yes, I have.'

'But how nice,' said Jane, putting the book down.

'Look inside,' croaked Hubert in the voice of a crow calling to a corn-crake.

She looked on the fly-leaf.

To
JANE

And tho'

The night fall black it shall not sever

Us two.

'Is this me?'

'Yes,' cawed Hubert.

'Thanks frightfully.'

'It's quite all right.'

'Is the bit underneath poetry?'

'Poetry.'

'How lovely. Is it modern poetry?'

'Modern poetry.'

There was a pause.

'I hope you'll like the book,' said Hubert.

'I hope so too—I mean, I'm sure I shall.'

'I thought you'd be pleased it being dedicated to you, and of course you always wanting me to write another book.'

'Of course.'

'So I wrote another.'

'Huh-huh—I mean, how perfectly topping!'

'It's generally considered a great honour to have a book dedicated to one.'

'Yes. It's awfully jolly.'

'I suppose you wouldn't reconsider our being engaged?'

'I'm afraid not.'

'No, I thought perhaps you wouldn't. Perhaps after a bit . . . when you've read the book . . .'

'I don't think so.'

'No? Well, it's as *you* like, of course. I don't want to force you.'

'I can understand your feeling that.'

'Then I'll leave it till later.' Hubert had sighed and got up. 'I hope you'll like the book.'

'I'm sure I shall. Good-bye.'

Then Charles had arrived. Though inwardly quaking he wore the cheerful grin and the breezy manner which is the heritage of those who have been in the insurance business. The contrast to Hubert was too great, and—well, a man can always tell. After half an hour things were going so merrily that Charles cut his plan of campaign down to a week; after an hour to a few days; after an hour and a half to the next day; and five minutes later he proposed.

It came out before he was aware of it. He was looking into her eyes. The golden rule when looking into a girl's eyes, if they are of a certain hazel variety, is to count three, then turn away. Some authorities say four, but in our opinion this is too long. Charles might have counted twenty-four and was of course lost beyond redemption. They had been discussing worm powders for dogs when their eyes met and Charles, in the middle of a fascinating story of the surprising results obtained with a strong dose on a Newfoundland, dropped the subject and got going. Rarely tongue-tied, in fact generally considered one of the ancient order of babblers, he did himself more than justice on this occasion. He hardly knew himself what he said, but it boiled down to the fact that he loved Jane, had always loved her and would always love her, that he was unworthy of her—a worm not fit even to be trodden on—but would she marry him? that he couldn't live without her and that she was the most beautiful, wonderful, superb girl in the world.

Jane waited for some little time after he had finished, for she liked it—especially the last part—and wanted him to go on.

'But Charles,' she murmured at length, 'you said you'd just called to apologise.'

'I've done that. I'm stopping on now to ask if you'll marry me.'

'I hardly know you.'

'You've known me for months. I'm quite respectable and have enough money.'

'Are you respectable? You steal dogs.'

'With you beside me, dearest, helping, encouraging, I'll fight and master the temptation. Will you marry me?'

'I'll think about it.'

'Darling!' cried Charles and kissed her.

'Father will be terribly cross,' murmured Jane after an interval devoted to a careful comparison of the kisses of Charles and Hubert, with a verdict, on points, definitely in favour of the former.

Charles winced. He had forgotten Mr. Whittle.

'You see, he doesn't like you.'

'No,' said Charles uneasily, 'I'm afraid he doesn't. Somehow, some time, Jane, I must make a better impression on him.'

'You'd better meet him to-night, I think, and do it then. Stay and have dinner.'

'All right,' said Charles manfully.

Mr. Whittle was in his study mapping out his plan of cross-fertilisation for the coming season. Jane entered.

'Father.'

'Yes, my dear.' Without looking up.

'Father, Mr. Wilburton is here and he's staying for dinner.'

All Mr. Whittle desired at the moment was privacy. The question as to whether Lady Sudeley should be crossed with Lord Hindlip or with the humbler James Grieve was occupying all his attention.

'Very well,' he said, and returned to his problem.

Jane left the room.

'If,' mused Mr. Whittle when she had gone, 'I cross Easter Maiden with the Rev. W. Wilks, or better still with Henry P. Grain, better results might be obtained. Or if——' He went on. There was this about his apples: he could marry them off without any trouble. Having arranged the match, they did not fly off at a tangent. Easter Maiden would never sack the Rev. W. Wilks for deceitfulness.

He brought his mind reluctantly and with difficulty from this match-maker's paradise to the more difficult realms in which his

daughter moved. The sacking of Hubert had caused him much concern when his daughter had told him. They had had a stormy interview from which he had retired worsted. Since then it had reached his ears that Mr. Chipping, senr., was in a bad way financially. Also, only yesterday, a man had called purporting to be a reporter who had asked to see Mr. Whittle. He conducted, he said, the society columns and general chit-chat news for several newspapers and would like to know if Miss Whittle's engagement to Mr. Chipping announced some time ago in the *Morning Post* was likely to be terminated in the usual happy manner.

Mr. Whittle had dismissed the fellow very summarily. He disliked reporters and still more conductors of society columns and general chit-chat news. Then reflection had set in. Society and chit-chat columns did not bother to that extent about the engagements of retired barristers' daughters. The man had been of pronounced Hebraic type. Mr. Whittle, though getting dodderly now and slightly infected himself with the powdery mildew he found so troublesome in his orchard, had once been an astute lawyer. Why, he wondered, should Jews be interested in the engagement and marriage of his daughter? Why——? Unless financially. And if financially, could he think otherwise than that they had assisted Hubert on the strength of his coming marriage. The thought was an unpleasant one. No one likes to be taken advantage of—least of all a lawyer.

Just as well, perhaps, that Jane *had* sacked Hubert. But now the whole business was to do over again. He knew his Jane. Her impulsive temperament would lead her to fall in love almost with the next comer. And who knew who that might be? The affair of Dexborough, the adventurer, was still fresh in his mind.

The gong went. Mr. Whittle put his papers carefully in a drawer and went downstairs. He entered the drawing-room rubbing his hands. Charles rose as he came in. Mr. Whittle stopped dead and gave him that one quick look that he usually reserved for the first apple aphides before he ran to get the syringe and the nicotine spray. He turned to his daughter, who was sitting by the fire.

'Jane!'

'Yes, father.'

'What is this man doing here?'

'He's staying to dinner. I told you.'

'You told me!'

'Yes. And you said it was all right.'

'I have no recollection of your telling me. In any case, he does not stay.'

'Father! You mustn't talk like that!'

Mr. Whittle held out his hand. 'Jane,' he said, 'I have usually indulged your vagaries; I have indulged them perhaps more than I ought to have done. I have allowed you to go your own way and choose your own friends. But on this occasion I must be adamant. This man is a thief.'

'Perhaps,' said Charles, 'I'd better——'

'No, stay,' said Jane with a motion of her hand. 'Father,' she said to her sire, 'you're being frightfully futile. Mr. Wilburton isn't really a thief. He tried to take Dick of Dickstone away as a—well, as a kind of joke, to give it back to me the next day. You see he wanted to get into my good books. And then all the other beastly dogs got out by mistake.'

'If he did that—and the tale is ridiculous—I consider it one degree worse than stealing the dog for the sake of its monetary value.'

'It's not, father. In the States fellows think nothing even of bumping off guys for the sake of a dame.'

'Where have you picked up such revolting language?'

'From Mr. Mundon.'

'Who was himself a thief. Really, Jane, your——'

'He was *your* guest, darling,' Jane reminded him. 'You introduced me to him.'

Mr. Whittle paused. He felt that perhaps the less said about Mr. Mundon the better. He had not been very astute over that affair. 'All this is beside the point,' he said. 'What I cannot understand is how this man has had the effrontery to return to this house.'

'He wanted to make a good impression on you.'

'He is failing singularly to do so. Jane, unless you can give me better reasons than you have done why this—er—this man should come here I must forbid him the house. It is my duty to do so.'

Although he had asked for a better reason Mr. Whittle nearly collapsed when he got it. 'I've promised to marry him,' said his daughter.

It took some time for Mr. Whittle to recover. When he did so his stiff, ironical manner deserted him and he became merely a very angry father. 'I forbid it,' he cried. 'You, sir'—he pointed to Charles, 'will now leave this house and will not return to it.'

'Darling,' said Jane, 'you're simply being old-fashioned. That sort of thing isn't done now. It's behind the times. I did my best with the man *you* picked out for me, and he was hopeless. Now I've picked out my own and I'm jolly well going to keep him.'

'As you did before with Dexborough. You will marry no adventurers, Jane. At least, if you do, you shall have none of my money.'

Jane turned to Charles. 'You've got a spot, haven't you, Charles? Enough to manage on, I mean?'

'I think so,' said Charles. He turned to Mr. Whittle. 'Honestly, sir,' he said, 'things aren't so bad as you think. I'm not an adventurer. I haven't got the brains . . . not for that sort of thing. As regards cash I think I've got enough. You see—luckily for me—my father was pretty well off and I came into it. Then there's my uncle Septimus—old Septimus Coryton. He's stuffed with money, of course. I hope he lives to be a hundred, but when he *does* hand his checks in I believe I'm down for most of it.'

'This,' said Mr. Whittle, 'is beside the point. Money is a very minor detail. From what I have seen of you you are an undesirable character and the last man I should allow my daughter to marry.'

Jane and Charles looked at each other and Jane shrugged her shoulders. There seemed really nothing much more to be done.

But Mr. Whittle was thinking.

'This Septimus Coryton you mentioned,' he said at length. '. . . He is not, I presume, the great pomological authority; the man who wrote *Chlorophyllic Tissue in Apple and Pear Trees* and discovered the Green Metz stock for grafting early bearing varieties?'

'Well, I don't know,' said Charles vaguely. 'Uncle Sep, of course, is frightfully crazy about fruit. The old fellow gets a lot of kick messing about with his orchard—I mean, he's a very enthusiastic gardener, and I believe he's written a lot of books on apples and things.'

'The man I refer to lives at Blakehurst in Kent.'

'That's where Uncle Septimus lives.'

'Then it is he!' said Mr. Whittle, gazing with awe at Charles. 'And you are his nephew . . . the nephew of the man who wrote *Chlorophyllic Tissue in Apple and Pear Trees*. How very remarkable! I consider Mr. Coryton to be the foremost pomological expert alive to-day. This is really——' He turned to his daughter. 'Jane, did I not hear the dinner gong sound some little time ago?'

Kindly lead the way, dear, into the dining-room. Mr. Wilburton, I expect, is hungry.

'What an amusing idea that was of yours,' he said to Charles as they made their way out of the room, 'to take my daughter's dog in order to return it to her and establish friendly relations! Most ingenious. *Most ingenious!*'

We are almost through. No need to labour the end. Anyone can see that Charles is now practically dug in. The reviewers (if the Metropolitan School of Writing is to be believed) will grumble at the happy ending that we, less wise than Charles, have been at no pains to avoid. But to them we would point out the wretchedness of Hubert Chipping surrounded by infuriated creditors, and especially that of Mr. Mundon returning money to suckers for the first time in his life.

Jane and Charles are in the drawing-room. Mr. Whittle has retired to his study to resume his cross-fertilising programme. He has been pleasantness itself, but he sits down at his desk with a stern air and scribbles almost brusquely:

Blenheim Maiden × Charles Ross
Duchess of Kent × William Smith

His own flesh and blood may balk him, Lilian Jane Whittle × Hubert Chipping may decline to be crossed, but he will stand no nonsense from his apples.

There came the crash of broken crockery from the dining-room and Dorothy's shrill scolding, followed by the voice of a man:

'Take a swim in de lake. Lick a stamp and post yourself, goil. De dish slip out of my han'.'

Jane sighed. 'It's Dorothy's young man,' she said. 'He helps her to clear and wash up. They're going away soon, thank Heaven!'

Charles went to the table and picked up the small parcel he had brought in with him.

'What is that?' asked Jane. 'I've seen you keep looking at it. Is there something alive in it?'

'No. You remember I told you once I could be as brainy as Hubert?'

'I remember you told me . . . yes.'

'Well then, look!'

Jane took the shiny, new, red book he gave her, glanced at the

back, and gasped. She looked quickly at Charles, then again at the book. She opened it and her eyes travelled down the title-page.

THE CIRCUMVENTION OF STEPHEN HOWE

BY

CHARLES WILBURTON

THE

GEORGE MUNDON

PRESS

'Charles!' she cried. 'Is—is this *you*?'

'It's me,' said Charles. 'And I couldn't speak or write grammatical English before I took the course!'

'Oh, Charles! How perfectly wonderful!'

'The printing isn't quite straight, is it?' he said doubtfully.

'A lot of it is. A lot of it's simply beautifully done, Charles.'

'I thought I'd better have it done properly,' said he.

They sat in silence then, these two: her hand stole into his. Faintly from the coppice could be heard the clear-toned hooting of an owl, and from the kitchen the musical tinkle of another broken dish.

THE END.

[A new serial by R. H. Mottram, entitled '*Flower Pot End*,' will begin in the April issue.]

THE SONG OF THE OLD GREEN ROAD.

LONELY I lie in my long lines over the Moorland.

Once I was young and strong, new-traced, tended and trodden,
In the days of the Old Folk, loving the high land and fearing the
valleys.

Over me went they, hunting or hauling their metals and merchandise,

Iron from the cleft land, jet from the seashore, boulders and wood-beams,

Swart folk, happy folk, light of limb, sturdy, industrious.

Dimly, out of the past, I remember the men who first made me,
Proud of my straightness, my length and the prospects they viewed
from me.

Rest, Brothers, rest, in your long-forgot tombs in the moorland.

Over me came the invaders, the Briton, the resolute Roman,

Long marching legions of Rome, disciplined, taciturn, wary,

Up from the South they came, northward, determined to conquer,

Used me, remade me, cursing the land of the cold winds, but
questioning never.

Went as they came, and left me again to the wolves and the birds
and the wild men.

Never again such glory for me, such marvellous goings and comings,
Long years of decay, silent days, and the merciless march of heather
and grasses upon me.

Sometimes fugitive men, shrieks in the night, and the fierce red
glow of a homestead burning.

Then loneliness as of death, for the moor-loving men have gone,
and the newcomers herd in the villages.

Centuries later the Drovers found me, and followed me chanting,
Driving long herds of lean cattle, iron-shod, leisurely, sweet-
breathed

Resting at night by the roadside, cooking their food by a peatfire,

304 THE SONG OF THE OLD GREEN ROAD.

Telling the tales of the traveller, hauntings, hobgoblins, or highwaymen,
Singing the songs of the Scots, or the ballads of Border or Sherwood.
Then again Silence, the shriek of the train in the Vale, or the bleat of the Coach horn.

Seldom now a foot falls on my verdant surface.
Sweet winds blow over the moor. Little flowers blossom and perish.
The cry of the grouse and the curlew, the call of the sheep stir the silence ;
The horse of a moorland farmer, returning or going to market ;
The straying feet of a boy. Sometimes in Autumn the shooters pass over me.

When the hard North wind blows up from the cities and coalfields,
Faintly I catch the stench of steam and of smoke and of herded humanity.

My heart aches for the people who walk the hard hot ways of those places,

Breathing a vicious air, hearing harsh sounds, soaking in ugliness.
Pale little children, dull women, weak men, will they ever learn wisdom ?

Will they learn as their fathers to love the fierce force of the winds in the winter ?

To walk long miles over wide spaces and never feel tired ?

To worship the bounteous sun, and watch his uprising with rapture ?

Will they again return to the moors and follow the tracks of their ancestors ?

MURIEL HOLMAN.

[We are asked by Mr. J. G. Legge to state that the lady referred to in 'Oxford in the Seventies,' in the February issue, as 'Miss Willett, the beautiful niece of Dr. Legge the Professor of Chinese,' was in reality Miss Willets, Dr. Legge's step-daughter, and that there is no foundation whatever for the belief that she was at any time engaged to Oscar Wilde.—EDITOR.]

VALEDICTION.

BY PETER NORMAN.

DUGDALE looked up from the engine of the launch.

'If you'll go and say "Good-bye" to the Missus,' he said, 'I'll get this thing fixed, and be ready for you in about ten minutes.'

'Isn't there anything I can do to help?' asked Courtenay.

'No,' answered the other, stopping again to examine the magnet. 'No, it's a one-man job. I know just what's wrong with it. You go and make your peace with the *mem*.'

His guest glanced down sharply at this, but Dugdale's thin shoulders were bent over the recalcitrant engine, and his face was hidden from view. He hesitated a moment, and then, with a slight shrug, turned back along the sun-drenched wooden jetty. He walked slowly, as though reluctant to enter the house; but as he mounted the steps of the verandah, Hilda slipped through the dining-room window, and faced him.

For a few seconds they stood looking at one another, neither speaking, and then she said abruptly, 'Come in here,' and turned back into the room.

With a slight grimace of distaste he followed her into the dim coolness. He had been hoping to avoid this *tête-à-tête*, and he would have done if it hadn't been for that infernal engine. Why the devil couldn't Dugdale keep the thing in order? he thought impatiently. He would have been saved this, if it hadn't been for his carelessness.

As he stepped into the room she turned again and looked at him. He was almost shocked at the change which had come over her since they had all sat at tiffin together. She had appeared much as usual then, and he had felt a little aggrieved to think that she took it so calmly, but now—her face was drawn and set, and she looked almost ugly. Her eyes searched his as though she would probe into his very soul, and he shifted uneasily beneath the intensity of their gaze.

For some moments they stood thus, facing one another, and he was beginning to find the silence intolerable, when she drew a long breath and sank into a cane chair.

'Well?' she said.

She spoke with a quietness utterly at variance with her strained aspect. He stood looking down upon her, not knowing what to say. He was not often at a loss for words, but he felt that the situation was beyond him. He stared at her helplessly.

'Have you nothing to say?' she demanded quietly.

At the tone of accusation in her voice he found his tongue.

'I don't see why you should take it like this,' he protested, in an injured voice. 'After all, I can't do anything else, can I? I only got the cable three days ago, and I can't let a chance like this slip—it's what I've been waiting for for the last three years.'

She continued to look at him without answering, and the unreasonableness of her attitude spurred him on to further speech.

'Hang it all, Hilda!' he said impatiently. 'What do you expect me to do? Am I to give up everything? To throw away a chance like this, and remain here, buried alive? I don't mean,' he went on hurriedly, 'that I haven't had a wonderful time, thanks to you. If it hadn't been for you I should have gone melancholy mad in the first six months! If it hadn't been for your sympathy, and—er—love'—he boggled at the word—'I don't know what I should have done! But, of course you knew—you must have known—that it had to come to an end some time. We couldn't have gone on indefinitely as we were. We've had a lot of luck in keeping it quiet, but he would have been bound to find out some day, and then . . .' His voice trailed into silence.

'And then?' she prompted, after a little pause.

'Well, we needn't discuss that,' he said, 'because it hasn't happened.'

'No,' she agreed slowly, 'it hasn't happened. But if it had?'

'Look here, Hilda,' he said, impatiently again, 'what's the use of going into that? You know I told you that I shouldn't allow you to suffer. Well, I meant it; but I'm not going to pretend I'm sorry it hasn't happened. I'm not! It would have been a deuced awkward position for me, you must admit.'

There was another pause, during which he eyed her uneasily, chafing inwardly at the silence, but feeling that the less he said the better. Women, he reflected, were always like this. They could never take a reasonable point of view.

'My God!' she said at last, speaking as though to herself.

'What a blind fool I've been!'

'I don't see why you should say that,' he muttered sulkily.

'Did you think it mattered to me whether we were found out

or not?' she burst out. 'I was ready. I have always been ready to throw up everything here and go away with you. *You* were the cautious one, and I—like a fool!—imagined it was for my sake! I thought you were trying to save me.'

'So I was,' he interposed.

'But I know now,' she went on, disregarding the interruption, 'that you were thinking of yourself! Time and again it has been on the tip of my tongue to tell Arthur everything—to tell him that he could never hope to take the place which you held in my life. I thought that once the truth was out, we could go away together—away from all this atmosphere of deceit and duplicity—all the petty lies, the invented excuses, which made our love contemptible in my own eyes! How was I to know that these things were everything to you? That you regarded it all as a game of skill; that you thought your deception of your friend clever, and that I was only the counter you played with!'

She had raised her voice as she went on, and he glanced uneasily at the door of the room. As she paused, he made a warning gesture.

'Careful,' he muttered, 'the servants.'

She laughed, contemptuously.

'The servants,' she repeated, 'what do I care about the servants! But you—you think it is not good form, perhaps?'

He flushed darkly at the scorn in her tone, and seemed about to make an angry retort, but checked himself.

'No,' she said, watching him, and divining what was in his mind.

'You won't say anything for fear of prolonging the discussion, and you're anxious to get away! If I was blinded before, my eyes are opened now—and you have opened them! Well, you are right. There's nothing more to be said. You have paid for your few months' amusement with a few minutes of discomfort, and now you are free to tell the story—with the appropriate air of gallantry!—of how you betrayed an honest man's friendship and seduced his wife! If you tell it properly, it should be rather amusing!'

He stared at her, honestly shocked by her words and manner, and she looked back at him with such a light of savage contempt in her eyes that he could find no words to refute her suggestion.

In the silence which followed, they heard Dugdale's footsteps on the planking of the jetty, and a moment later his form appeared, framed in the entrance.

'She's O.K. now,' he told Courtenay. 'Ah Feng has put your baggage on board, and if you're ready we'll start.' He turned to

his wife. 'I suppose you wouldn't care for the trip?' he asked casually.

He appeared to notice nothing unusual in the atmosphere, and Courtenay braced himself for the final leave-taking which would follow her refusal. And then, to his astonishment, she said, slowly, 'That's quite a good idea. Yes, I think I will.'

He fancied that Dugdale himself was rather taken aback at the readiness with which she had fallen in with the suggestion. She went into her bedroom to fetch her topee, and the two men strolled to where the launch was lying, with the soft mutter of the engine pulsating through the hot air.

'We'll have to look alive, shan't we?' asked the younger man, looking at his watch. 'These S.S.S. boats don't wait long, and she's due off the river mouth at four o'clock.'

'Plenty of time,' declared Dugdale, stepping down the sun-bleached ladder to the landing-stage. 'Just cast an eye over your dunnage, will you? We don't want to find out that we've left something behind when we're half-way down.'

The other glanced over the pile of suitcases lying in the stern sheets, and pronounced the sum complete. The Chinese house-boy, who had brought the gear down from the house, was standing at the end of the stage, looking down into the brown water. Courtenay took a roll of bills from his pocket, peeled off one, and held it out to him.

'Here you are, Ah Feng,' he said pleasantly.

To his surprise, the Chinaman shook his head, and clasped his hands behind his back.

'No, t'ank you,' he said, looking impassively at the planking at his feet.

'Go on! Take it!' urged Courtenay. '*Cumshaw!*' he added, in explanation.

Ah Feng merely shook his head, and repeated his refusal without looking up, and Courtenay, with an uneasy laugh, turned to Dugdale.

'What's the matter with your "boy," Dugdale?' he asked. 'He must be ill, I should think! I never knew a Chink to refuse *cumshaw* before!'

'I shouldn't worry him, if I were you,' advised Dugdale, placidly. 'Ah Feng has his own notions of what is right and proper.'

'Oh, very well,' said Courtenay, indifferently, thrusting the note

back into his pocket again. 'I suppose he must think me wrong and improper, then?'

Dugdale returned no answer to this, and a moment later Hilda appeared at the head of the jetty, and descended the steps on to the landing-stage. In her hand she bore a leather cartridge belt, from which depended a large pistol holster.

'I saw you hadn't taken your pistol,' she said to her husband, 'so I've brought it down for you.'

He nodded his thanks, and Courtenay, who had stepped into the stern of the launch, held out his hand to help her in. Ah Feng, at the same moment, leaped lightly on to the gunwale, and held out his hand. With a slight smile upon her face she disregarded the white man and accepted the house-boy's proffered aid, who then jumped out and cast off the stern line of the boat.

Courtenay, with a black scowl upon his face, took his seat as the launch swung out into the stream, and the engine woke to life. He was acutely conscious of the implied insult, and, try as he might, he could not avoid showing it. To slang him in private, as she had done, was one thing, but deliberately to prefer a house-boy's assistance to his own, was another thing altogether! He wondered what Dugdale would have thought if he had seen the incident.

Well, thank the Lord, the whole business was over now! What the devil would he have done if it had leaked out before? Common decency would have compelled him to keep his word to her and take her away. A nice fool he would have looked, arriving at Headquarters with Dugdale's wife, and a request for a new job! Besides, what sort of a life would he have led with her? He was not cut out for a family man, and she had given him a taste of her quality that afternoon.

That was the worst of these intense women! They always overdid it! An affair of this kind should be conducted with a light hand. He had never intended it to be more than a diversion—something to alleviate the boredom of existence on a lonely station. Of course he had said all sorts of things, made all kinds of promises, but then, it was all part of the game. A woman expected them, and if the worst had come to the worst, he would have played the game out. But no one but a fool would expect him to go to such an extreme when the husband knew nothing, suspected nothing, of the affair.

The scene in the house had left a nasty taste in his mouth. What had she said? 'Betrayed an honest man's friendship and seduced

his fool of a wife !' It sounded ugly, put that way. A remark in the very worst of taste. It wasn't as though she had been an inexperienced girl with no knowledge of life. She had entered into the game with at least as much zest as he had hoped for. And now, because the affair had ended before she was tired of it, she had played the tragedy queen ! Natural enough, he supposed, glancing at the small, spare form of Dugdale, and mentally contrasting it with his own well-built figure.

The launch was now out of sight of the bungalow and landing-stage, and travelled fast downstream. The engine was missing on one cylinder, and Dugdale was bending over, doing something to it. The awning kept off the direct glare of the sun, but it was terrifically hot, despite the breeze caused by their passage. He looked sideways at the woman, sitting aft. Her head was bent forward, and she was gazing at the straw matting which covered the floor of the stern sheets as though she found something of absorbing interest there. He felt he must say something to break the silence. Dugdale would think it funny if they sat there without exchanging a word. He racked his brains for some safe topic upon which he could commence a conversation. Nothing occurred to him. It was as though he were confronted with a stranger. What could he talk about ? The weather ? Impossible ! The only reference which anyone could possibly make to the weather was to curse the heat, and he had been doing that for three years now. His relief ? Better than nothing, anyhow. He cleared his throat.

'It's pretty rotten about my relief,' he said. 'What the deuce the Company is thinking about, to put a Eurasian in charge of a post like this, I can't imagine !'

She had glanced up at him at the first sound of his voice, but immediately resumed her contemplation of the matting. She made no answer to his remark, and he resumed heavily :

'These chaps are all very well when they've got a white man over them, but they've got no initiative of their own. He'll come to grief for a certainty ! The Malays don't like them, and they haven't the sense of justice which carries an Englishman through. And then, socially . . .' He paused.

'You're sorry for us, socially ?' she murmured, without raising her eyes.

He looked at her resentfully. Dugdale was still fiddling with the engine and had, apparently, not heard.

'I may be flattering myself,' he said, with heavy sarcasm, 'but

I certainly don't think that you'll find Da Silva the ideal companion. . . .'

'Which you have been,' she ended for him. 'No, that's true. We shall find a difference, there.'

He stared at her angrily, appreciating the irony which lay behind her words. Confound the woman! If this was the way in which she was going to treat his attempts at conversation, what the devil had she come for?

He lapsed into a sulky silence.

The engine was running well now, and they slipped past the banks rapidly. The glare out in midstream was intense, but where the mangroves came down into the water on either hand, the shadows were almost purple. Nothing could be seen under the canopy of green, but the sombre gloom seemed to hold unthinkable possibilities. The deep hush of the blazing tropic afternoon hung over everything. Occasionally the eye could discern a movement, as a crocodile, disturbed by the noise of the launch's engine, waddled clumsily down from the mud bank and sank silently into the brown water. Even the troops of little mangrove monkeys maintained an unwonted silence.

Dugdale sat staring straight ahead, the steering-wheel held loosely in his hands. From where he sat in the stern sheets Courtenay could see the sweat running down the back of his neck under the brim of his topee.

Half an hour went by without another word being spoken. To Courtenay the time dragged intolerably. It seemed as though the journey had lasted as far back as the memory could reach. It was as though they had always been travelling thus. Hilda sitting with downcast head, mute, immobile; Dugdale, silent and remote; and himself, his brain lulled into a state of torpor, unable to drag his thoughts away from the present. And behind all, the 'phut-phut' of the engine; a monotonous pulsating background, insistent, deadening. It filled the brain with its steady persistence, like the rapid throbbing of a fevered pulse, crowding out all speculation for the future, all memory of the past. To his normally active mind, there was something horrible about this lack of movement, this mental stupor which had descended upon him, but try as he would, his sluggish brain refused to stir from its present surroundings, and his eyes remained fixed dully on the back of Dugdale's neck.

Eons of time seemed to have passed, when at length they rounded the last turn of the river, and came in sight of the sea.

It lay before them, flat and calm, with never a ripple upon its smooth, glassy surface, stretching out to the vague horizon. Even the remote suggestion of shade afforded by the river banks was now lost, and they appeared to be the sole target for the sun's pitiless rays.

Dugdale shut off the engine and mopped his streaming forehead. The faint swishing sound of the water died away as the launch lost way, and finally lay motionless on the oily sea. He glanced along the low-lying, tree-clad coast to the westward, round which the steamer would come. The glare from the sun hurt his eyes, and his gaze returned to the stern of the launch where the other two were sitting.

'We're early,' he remarked, casually.

He drew his pipe from his pocket and proceeded to fill it. The other two were watching him idly, and when he had lit it, Courtenay produced his cigarette-case and offered it to Hilda. She shook her head, without speaking, and he selected one himself and lit it. For some moments there was silence in the boat, the two men smoking, and the woman watching her husband, and drumming absently on the gunwale with her fingers.

Dugdale was the first to speak.

'Have you ever noticed,' he said, 'that when something is happening, it invariably takes longer than we anticipate?'

Courtenay flicked the ash from his cigarette overboard.

'In what way?' he asked.

'Why,' said Dugdale, slowly, 'I was thinking of you. You received your cable three days ago. For two days you have been squaring things up and turning them over to Da Silva—it must have seemed an interminable job. Then you finally turn your back on your station, and you think that at last you are fairly off. But there was the journey to our place. You arrive there, and sit through a lengthy meal; there's a slight delay over the launch, an endless journey down the river, and now a further wait for the steamer. Now, I don't mind wagering that when you received your cable, you visualised your departure as a smooth transition from one place to the other. Instead, it turns out to be a series of delayed starts with never a conscious ending to any of them.'

'I fancy you're right,' agreed Courtenay, 'but what made you think of it?'

'Oh, things in general,' replied Dugdale, vaguely. 'For one

thing, I noticed that you were restive at tiffin. At first I thought that it must be on account of your leaving Hilda, but then it occurred to me that you are not the type of man to worry much over an affair like that, and so the other explanation came naturally into my mind.'

His listeners were differently affected by his words. Courtenay, at mention of Hilda's name, started quite perceptibly, and then strove to appear unconcerned. She, on the other hand, glanced keenly at her husband's thoughtful face, and then fell to studying the matting at her feet once more. Only her fingers ceased drumming that tattoo on the gunwale, and she grasped it with a force which caused her knuckles to gleam white, like ivory.

'What made you decide to come at the last minute, Hilda?' asked Dugdale, suddenly.

Her eyes flickered over Courtenay, and returned to her husband's face.

'A desire to see the last of our guest, I suppose,' she answered composedly.

Dugdale nodded thoughtfully. He was silent for a moment, then he turned to Courtenay.

'Isn't it amazing,' he said, 'the way in which fate interferes with all our plans. We make the most elaborate preparations, and take every possible precaution against things going wrong, and then we find that some little circumstance has thrown everything out, and we've had all our trouble for nothing!'

Courtenay flicked the ash from his cigarette overboard.

'Seems to me I've heard that before, somewhere,' he said.

'Oh, I don't claim that it's an original reflection,' Dugdale observed, 'but at least it has the merit of being appropriate.'

'Oh!—Why?' Courtenay asked, leaning back, and clasping his hands behind his head.

Dugdale looked at him reflectively.

'You know, I never intended that you should get down here alive,' he said simply.

Courtenay stared at him uncomprehendingly.

'You never . . . ?' he began, and stopped.

'No,' said Dugdale, looking at him thoughtfully. 'But there, as I say, all our plans are at the mercy of these little unexpected circumstances. Hilda elected to come down with us, and so—here we are,' he finished.

'What do you mean?' demanded Courtenay, hoarsely. He

was so taken aback by the matter-of-fact directness of the other's statement that he found himself unable to grasp the situation.

'Why, it's very simple,' explained Dugdale, gently. 'You see, when we first came here—six years ago—it was my intention to stay for five years only, and then to clear out and go home. I had always pictured the sort of life we should have led. A little place in the country—Surrey or Sussex—large garden, fowls, perhaps; long walks in the summer—all that sort of thing! My wife happy and contented—children, possibly—an altogether idyllic existence. Well, before the five years are up, your Company decides to open up a station on this river, and you arrive. You change the whole programme.'

He paused again, and knocked the ashes from his pipe against the side of the launch.

'I had had a unique opportunity of studying my wife's character, in the years before you came,' he went on, 'so that it didn't take me very long to discover the place you occupied in her mind. At first, I must admit, I was tempted to trap you with her—a simple enough matter—and do something violent, but I soon realised the unfairness of that—the unfairness to my wife, I mean.'

Courtenay was sitting rigidly upright, staring at him with dilated eyes. In his mind a furious controversy was raging. What was the correct attitude for him to adopt? He was acutely conscious that there was some definite stand which he should take, some particular manner in which he should react. He knew that the ultimate consequences depended upon his attitude now, but for the life of him he could not make up his mind which to adopt.

Dugdale's placid voice went on:

'I have always known that you were a shallow, superficial fellow,' he said, 'and I realised that to Hilda you would sooner or later betray yourself, and so I said nothing. I would not risk ruining both our lives for what, I was convinced, could be nothing more than a passing phase. Of course, *you* are incapable of understanding this point of view; but I loved my wife.'

She glanced swiftly at him at this point, and Courtenay opened his mouth as though to speak, but before he could do so, Dugdale resumed:

'Then this cable came. It precipitated a crisis, and left me two things to choose from. I could either force a scene in my own house and trust to luck that you would damn yourself in her sight, or—and this was the one I selected—we should have

had an accident on our way down the river—an accident which would have effectually disposed of the two of us; for life would not have been worth living if you had left behind you a memory which would have been a constant barrier between us. I purposely left my pistol behind (knowing that you would have packed yours) so that there would be no complications with the—er—accident, which I had arranged.'

He paused again, leaning back against the gunwale, and gazing dreamily at the awning.

Courtenay forced himself to speak.

'And now?' he asked, his voice sounding strange in his own ears.

Dugdale withdrew his gaze from the awning, and looked at him, half-absently.

'Oh, now!' he said. 'It doesn't matter, *now*! Unless I am much mistaken, you have done all that I could have hoped for, yourself. I don't imagine she has any illusions about you now. If you still held any place in her affections, do you imagine that she would have accompanied us? You see, I know my wife!'

He turned to her. 'You haven't any further use for him, have you, Hilda?' he asked, in a casual tone.

She was sitting with her hand before her face, but at his question she looked up, dry-eyed, and stared directly at Courtenay's face.

'No,' she said clearly.

'So there you are!' resumed Dugdale, almost cheerfully. 'You are free to go, and that's the end of it!'

The other man glared at him. This casual dismissal was more than his pride could stand. They treated him as though he was a thing of no importance; as though he were the merest incident in their lives! Insanely, he felt the need for asserting himself, for proving that he was not so easily disposed of. His reason told him that safety lay in accepting the situation, but his natural arrogance and conceit would hear of no such thing. His outraged pride forced him to speak.

'Of course, she'd say that!' he sneered savagely. 'I'm going away, and she's got to live with you! And you—you don't object to your wife having an intrigue with another man, so long as she comes back to you when it's finished! You don't mind the rôle of the injured husband!'

Dugdale looked at him calmly.

'You don't seem to have grasped the situation,' he said gently.

'If I thought that Hilda retained any feeling for you other than contempt, I should feel the necessity for more stringent action, but, as it is, I am perfectly content that you should go unharmed.'

As he finished speaking, the low wail of a steamer's siren cut through the hot silence. Instinctively, they all three looked in the direction of the sound. The vessel had rounded the farther headland, and was coming towards them, with a black plume of smoke hanging above her. As they watched, they could hear the beat of her screw coming across the still water.

Dugdale leaned forward and re-started the launch's engine, and they headed towards her. As they drew nearer, they heard the ring of the engine-room telegraph bell as the engines were stopped. A white man appeared, superintending the clearing away of the rails on the port side. The launch circled and came up under the steamer's counter; the engine was shut off, and the two vessels lay side by side, hardly moving.

A Malay seaman threw down a coil of rope and Dugdale made the end fast to a ringbolt on the launch's fore-deck.

Somers, the mate, thrust his head over the side and touched his topee to Hilda.

'Hello, Dugdale!' he said. 'I didn't know you'd got the wife with you or I'd have lowered the accommodation-ladder. Coming with us?'

'No,' Dugdale returned, 'but you'll have Mr. Courtenay's company. If you'll go inboard,' he added to his late guest, 'I'll see to your baggage going up.'

Courtenay rose without a word, and climbed up the rope ladder on to the steamer's deck, where he stood looking down while Dugdale chatted with the mate, and passed a line round the various bags and suitcases as the Malay seamen hoisted them up.

Sinclair, the captain, came to the end of the bridge, and joined in the conversation.

'When are you going to pull out, Dugdale?' he asked.

'Oh, not yet awhile,' Dugdale answered, laughingly. 'We're just getting used to the place.'

'You'll be more lonely than ever now, won't you?' asked the captain, nodding towards Courtenay.

'We'll find a difference,' admitted Dugdale, enigmatically. 'But two can be fine company when they know each other properly!'

The last of Courtenay's bags had gone up, and Somers tossed

down a bundle of newspapers into the stern sheets. Dugdale nodded his thanks, and cast off the line which secured the launch alongside.

'Well, so long!' he said. 'See you again next month. Good-bye, Courtenay! Hope you have a pleasant voyage.'

He started the launch's engine, and waved a hand in farewell as the little vessel's head swung round in the direction of the river-mouth.

Sinclair strolled over to the telegraph and moved the lever to 'Full Ahead.'

The other two men stood gazing after the launch until it had become a black speck in the distance. At last, the mate turned to Courtenay, who had not spoken a word since he came on board.

'A bit of a wrench leaving them after all this time,' he said sympathetically, construing the other's silence in his own way.

Courtenay turned on him a bleak, set face.

'A wrench?' he repeated, and laughed, mirthlessly. 'Yes, I suppose you're right!' And then he added, as he turned and stalked away to his cabin: 'God damn them!'

There was such concentrated vindictiveness and fury in his voice that Somers was left staring after him open-mouthed.

The launch was between the banks now, pushing rapidly upstream. Dugdale, who had been leaning over the engine, straightened himself in his seat and looked astern to seaward. The steamer had passed from view, and only the empty horizon showed blue to the paler skyline. He withdrew his gaze from the distance and glanced at his wife. She was sitting with bowed head in the stern sheets. Her face was covered with her hands, and as he watched her, a tear forced its way between her fingers, hung poised for a moment, and dropped on to the matting.

Dugdale's face softened into a slight smile, and he turned back to the engine. Sussex no longer seemed so far off.

FRONT HALLS.

BY G. M. N. RAMSAY.

THERE is a great deal in a front hall. Not merely furniture ; of that there is often too much, occasionally too little. But every hall has character, the empty hall as well as the over-furnished one. Each has much to say to the observant caller, while even the least observant knows the difference between the hall which welcomes him, and the hall which makes him wish to turn and fly the moment he is granted admission. He forgot how late it was ; he remembers an engagement. How few have courage to say this ! Yet we all know the feeling. What causes it ? A mustard-coloured wall-paper perhaps, a dingy light, a dusty collection of carved Indian furniture—all these discourage. A heap of umbrellas and hats, arguing an afternoon party, will frighten any man ; but that is an accident, it is not the fault of the hall. Three men-servants make one quail ; but there lives not the man who has the courage to fly from these when bidden to enter.

The affair begins before the door is opened. There is the bell to ring. Which bell ? Some doors have three : Visitors, Servants, Night Bell. No one rings the Night Bell on purpose, but it is often too dark to see the name, and this one may be the most prominent. If you continue to ring the Night Bell, you will in the end have to drop your card in the letter-box and acknowledge defeat. 'Servants' bell is better. If you ring this, you will be shown into the dining-room and told to wait ; or, if your appearance is judged doubtful, a seat in the hall is all you will get.

It is better to search carefully before you commit yourself, and find 'Visitors.' Even here there may be complications. 'Knock and ring.' Detestable advice. In this century we do not know how to knock ; and who dares do both ? 'Do not ring unless an answer is required.' This means thought. Do I want an answer ? Of course ; but it is disconcerting and one rings timidly.

Again, who knows how loudly the bell will go off, even with a modest ring ? I rang, the other day, the correct bell, the only bell. It went off just within the door and continued to ring, like an alarm clock, till the maid came. I tried to explain, to apologise,

but only by degrees did she thaw. Neither of us could stop the bell. It was a patent one and had gone wrong. That sort of reception is shattering.

The perils of the bell surmounted, what of the hall which the opening door discloses? A hall either welcomes you or it does not. It is not only the way the door is opened. A hall may look most inviting through a door held half-shut in suspicion. Of course there is a great deal in the manner and expression of the opener of the door; from the smile which makes you feel that you are the most valued and welcome visitor that ever comes to the house to the 'This-is-my-castle-who-dares-approach' sort of attitude.

The hall itself speaks. It conveys an impression. It may encourage; it may depress; it may welcome, pure and simple. It may alarm; it may surprise. The impression it gives should, properly, be a suitable prelude to the visit. An alarming hall should, for instance, prepare one to face a stiff and forbidding hostess; though sometimes it leads only to a kindly old lady knitting by the fire. This is like ice pudding with a hot sauce.

It may surprise. You make the acquaintance, let us say, of a charming lady; she is well dressed, distinguished-looking. She asks you to call. You are met as the door opens by a smell of onions. It is a rude shock. Onions and your fascinating friend refuse to go into the same picture.

Now either the onions must go, or the vision must go. A sudden fierce battle rages as you walk upstairs. Perhaps she is in lodgings and the onions are not her fault; but a Vision has no business to choose lodgings with any risk of onions. You look round for help; a tidy and dignified maid, a good stair carpet, a pleasant and subdued light, and the onions fade. On the other hand, a dirty apron, a mahogany hat-stand, greasy marks on the wall-paper and the onions have it. Who has not known such a struggle of warring impressions?

There are people whose charm is such as to make one forget not only the onions but the dirty apron, and to remove entirely the gloomy impression made by the hall. But ordinary people find it quite hard enough to convey to others how interesting and attractive, and generally worth knowing they are without any such handicap. Therefore let us consider the front hall seriously and study how to give it that welcoming appearance to the visitor which will incline him to be genial and friendly, and to see us at our best.

First of all there must be room to get in ; or rather there must appear to be room to get in. There must be a feeling of space somewhere ; otherwise we don't want to go in. On the other hand, if it be too large and spacious it gives one no moral support. It is very difficult to walk across a vast hall or up a too-wide staircase. Only an actress or a Royalty can do it with success. The ordinary person needs to have the channel marked with buoys, so to speak. He walks with confidence through a clearly marked passage-way, or up a stair where the banister feels within his reach, while he will take a wavering and uncertain course over a clear ocean of carpet. Why ? No one knows ; but it is human nature.

Space then ; not too much space, yet space. Therefore if your uncle has left you a legacy of a massive coat-umbrella-and-hat-stand, harden your heart. However much he treasured it—though it be the best oak or mahogany—though it hold unlimited coats and hats—harden your heart. If your conscience does not allow you to sell it, put it anywhere except in the hall. The coats and umbrellas must go somewhere, of course ; and it is a false delicacy which hides them completely out of sight (as in some cities butchers' shops are only allowed to be in back streets) besides being very inconvenient. The guest who wishes to go out has to try all the doors round the hall before he finds his coat, and may if he is not careful fall down the kitchen stair. No ; coats and umbrellas must be in sight, so put up a row of hooks and buy a tile for the umbrellas if you can do nothing more, but put your uncle's legacy elsewhere. Why not paint it white and put it in the greenhouse to hold flower-pots ?

A peep of the garden behind as the front door opens, gives a feeling of air and space, but remember that the open door of the pantry does not. For this reason an experienced housekeeper will never take a house with a pantry so placed that it is visible from the front door. For though you may try to keep the pantry door shut, you will not succeed.

What else is necessary ? A chair for the visitor to sit on who rings the servants' bell, or for you to stand on to mend the electric light. Some people hold to a barometer. A grandfather clock is better, and it need not go. In fact it will look older and more valuable if it does not go. If you have a Fitzroy barometer, the hall is the place for it ; but do not hang it where your visitors will knock it with the shoulder as they come in. It is better to hang it on the other side even though it be half-hidden by your Burberry.

A table with a drawer to hold your gloves (otherwise your visitors may take them), the key of the garden opposite, if you are a townsman, golf balls or a trowel if you are not. A gong, or a bell, to summon to meals.

Brass jugs lighten up a dark hall; an old copper warming-pan hung on the wall always looks hospitable; there is an unlimited choice of pictures; and most important of all perhaps—the wall-paper and the carpet. The carpet should, if possible, be thick, for that muffles the footsteps and helps the self-conscious visitor.

When everything has been considered and the hall is complete as far as furniture is concerned, it waits to receive its final impress before it speaks to the visitor. It is clean, fresh, and orderly; it promises well; but so far it is only promise. It is not complete till the character of the inmates has been impressed upon it. A room conveys a personal impression of its owner; so does the front hall of his house. If after two years it looks exactly as it did the day it was put in order, that gives an impression as definite in its way as if it has gathered a number of miscellaneous objects 'because there was nowhere else to put them.' In one hall the box for letters on the table is cleared daily at regular hours; the A B C in the green leather cover is up to date. In another hall which starts as fair and hopefully the letter-box is never opened except when the latch-key is lost to see if by accident it was put there; the green cover contains an A B C months old, or the Post Office Guide. A parcel of books may lie on the table for weeks unopened. 'I know what it is.' 'It's all right,' and presently it becomes an habitual tenant of the hall table.

Between these two extremes lie comfort and geniality. The too orderly hall is like an hotel and gives a chill (is it the very absence of the personal note, even though given by disorder, which gives that chill in an hotel?); the neglected hall is depressing, and speaks of futile endeavour. Every day that parcel is left there it becomes less possible to open it. There are too many chairs; but it seems impossible to decide which is the one to take away or where to put it, so they all remain. Note that an untidy hall is quite different from the hall of futile endeavour; for an untidy hall may be brimming over with life, and give a most cheerful impression except to an old maid. A picture rises to the mind of the hall of a country house, wide and rambling. It is a summer morning; in the background someone is arranging flowers at an oak chest, surrounded with a confusion of fresh flowers, glasses,

large jugs of water, *débris* of dead flowers ; the chair beside it is occupied by an armful of wet ferns. At the great hall table near the entrance someone is weighing and addressing game boxes, while the newly arrived post is being spread over the other end of it. At the window sits a man in his worst clothes putting a new tail-fly on his cast ; in his search for scissors he has left the tool drawer of the hall table open. Another is reading items aloud from a newspaper, while someone else is composing a telegram with the help of any advice which is disengaged. Boxes of hats on approbation are being opened by the ladies of the party, and golf clubs hastily abandoned near the door have slipped onto the floor so that the next person who comes in is bound to fall over them.

Half an hour later the hall is deserted ; the flowers are in the drawing-room, the telegram and the grouse boxes have gone to the post ; the fisherman is on the river, and the golfers at the second hole, but not all the tidying in the world will remove from the hall the feeling of busy life. The flowers have been swept up, the telegraph forms put back to their proper place, the tool-drawer shut. There remains a something. Is it the old cast lying on the top of *Punch* ? The string of the hat box, cut in the hurry, the wet still shining on the oak chest ? Partly, but there is something more. It is none the less real that it is impossible to define it further. That hall in its quiet hours looks living. A chair which is habitually sat in looks different to a chair which is only dusted. A table over which the tide of things flows and ebbs all day long looks, at the high and dry moments, different to the hall table of the hotel and the furniture shop ; on the other hand, nothing but daily use can give the look of life. Everyone who has moved into a furnished house, or who comes home after the holidays to make the house ready for the rest of the family, knows the depressing look of the hall. It may be clean, tidy, thoroughly dusted ; but it is chill, unfriendly. In the shut-up house the hall table has relapsed into the impersonal sleep of the furniture shop ; and it will be some days before it is thoroughly awake and taking its usual share in the family life.

So when you have done your best—or your worst—with the hall you must stand aside ; the finishing touches are beyond your control. They are given by your character, by the character of the family in general, and by the life which daily flows through it. For active life leaves inexorably its mark on everything it touches, perceptible to all save itself. Who knows his own way of

walking? Yet his friends will recognise him by it from a long way off. Wherever we walk we leave a track for others to see (and interpret if they will), if it be only through our own front hall, and when we have gone in and out a sufficient number of times, those who come to call will know as they mount the stair whether they are likely to meet a friend and a welcome.

Let us not go too far. There is a book who runs may read, and each can only read as much as his knowledge and understanding permits. You may have made your front hall to your entire satisfaction; you may be in the opinion of your friends charming and open-hearted; in spite of all some people will sniff an enemy as they take off their coats, and slip on the armour of prejudice. The very absence of the mahogany hat-stand; the light-coloured wall-paper you chose with such care; a whiff of cigar smoke, an abandoned coffee-cup. There is no one to explain that your brother has just been hurried off to the train; in any case the white walls are 'neither thrifty nor practical.' If the armoured one be an elderly relation, coming to see your new house, you may be told this, and realise with a shock that she (it is probably a she) loves and admires her own dark and cumbrous hall furniture and chose—actually chose—that gloomy wall-paper. It is a shock similar to that which you receive when, full of sympathy for a girl friend who would really be quite pretty if she did not wear such dowdy hats, you tell her about a shop which has charming hats at very moderate prices; and she replies by telling you about the shop where *she* always goes, 'because the hats are so smart.' Pity is changed into wonder. She likes those dowdy hats; she has chosen them for their smartness.

To return to your house. You cannot make it welcome everybody, all you can do is to hang out signals. Those who can read them and like their meaning will come in prepared to find a friend. It lies with you to do the rest.

ON A CANADIAN RIVER.

BY THURSTAN TOPHAM.

THERE is a river in the Province of Quebec, one of the smaller tributaries of the great Ottawa, and known as the North River.

For me, as an English settler and a keen fisherman, this water holds a great charm ; firstly, because it is the home of some other emigrants—a colony of British brown trout ; and secondly, because it so often reminds me of my boyhood fishing days on English streams.

So far as I am aware, it is the only river in Quebec that contains brown trout. What are generally known as 'red' trout here are really char—*Salvelinus*¹ *fontinalis*—and most beautiful fish they are, brightly coloured and shaded in pastel tints of blue, red and violet. They are plentifully scattered in nearly all the thousands of lakes and streams throughout the hill districts of the Province.

Since discovering them, I have been particularly interested in these British fish of the North River, and have gradually ferreted out something of their history. I am told that they were originally imported as fry or yearlings from the Howietown hatchery in Stirlingshire, some thirty or forty years ago, by a local landowner who turned them into a lake (Lac Brulé) on his property. This lake is one of the sources of the North River.

Now the winters in Canada are long and cold, so that the lakes and rivers freeze tight until the spring thaw comes along. And when spring arrives, it comes with a rush, and the ice breaks up and the little brooks swell mightily and become roaring torrents. So the young brown trout (one can imagine them very weak, surprised, and weary at their long imprisonment beneath the ice) feeling the current of the little brook—now swollen with snow water to four or five times its ordinary size—headed down-stream in a body, shot the log dam, and disappeared completely and thoroughly from the waters of Lac Brulé, much to the hopeful owner's annoyance.

They were given up, mourned, and reckoned as lost or devoured by the larger fish, the black bass and 'red' trout of the country.

¹ Although *Salvelinus fontinalis* is commonly referred to in Quebec as red trout, it is more correct to use the word 'speckled.' The true Red Trout of Quebec is *Salvelinus Marstoni*, very rarely caught, and found in few lakes.

But a year or two later, the local native French-Canadian fishermen began to catch in the North River an occasional—to them—very curiously marked trout, which they soon began to call a 'ouananiche,' confusing it with the true ouananiche or landlocked salmon of the Saguenay district of Northern Quebec. Apparently our settlers had become acclimatised and adopted the North River as their new home.

From now on they grew more numerous, evidently breeding, young fish being taken as well as two-pounders. To-day, though not plentiful, they have wellnigh driven the original 'red' trout from the stream and have succeeded in holding their own against the pugnacious bass. There are now some 'very great trouts,' six- and seven-pounders, haunting one or two of the deeper pools, although I cannot yet boast of catching any of these monsters, who have taken to bad ways, along with age and girth, and become horrid cannibals, mostly disdaining such dainty food as flies. One at least of them has become locally famed, and is known as 'Moby Dick.' He has inhabited the same pool for several seasons and has been hooked on various occasions, but so far has successfully avoided the landing-net. His tactics do not vary much, that is, on being struck he makes a wild dash down-stream like a mad bull, not stopping until he has run out the whole line and snapped the cast. As the banks of the river at this point are either a tumbled mass of rocks or else thickly covered with close-growing trees it is next to impossible to follow him down quickly enough. I have tried for him with fly and minnow, and watched him leap, but he is still at liberty. But wait, Moby! Your time is coming. One of these days I will avenge the murdered innocents, the young trout and fieldmice upon which you batten and may the good fight you put up atone for your misdeeds!

Let me tell of what I count as a good day on the North River. My son Tom and I leave my home in Montreal about eight o'clock of a bright, fresh morning in early June, in our little Chevrolet car. We have a drive of about two and a half hours ahead of us. Soon the City and Island of Montreal are behind us, as we cross the fine new Pont Viau and reach the Ste. Agathe Highway. Village after village we pass: Ste. Rose, Ste. Therese, St. Janvier, St. Jerome; nearly all are named after Saints. Some of the Quebec village names strike very quaintly on the ear, such as St. Polycarpe, Ste. Emelie de l'Energie (irreverently alluded to sometimes as 'Energetic Emily') and Ste. Rose du Dégelé. There is a story told of one

village that, as a tiny hamlet with a mill, was originally known by the English name of Crabtree Mill. Growing rapidly, a Catholic church was built and the village re-christened by the French-Canadians. It now boasts the awe-inspiring name of 'St. Paul de l'Enfant Jésus du Moulin de Crabtree' ! Possibly the original owner of the mill was a Mr. Crabtree and the new christeners felt they ought to keep some connexion with the old name.

After passing the small town of St. Jerome, where the first glimpse of the North River is caught, we get out of the flat farming country and begin to climb the slopes of the Laurentian Mountains. Not huge, they remind me strongly of northern Wales, but gradually become more and more rugged, and clad with forests of spruce and pine. In the hollows below us winds the river, sometimes gleaming white over rapids, sometimes deep-hued with indigo and forest-green reflection. Big white clouds cast their rolling shadows on the hillsides. I have grown to love this Laurentian country with its spaciousness, its scents of balsam and pine, its little log-built farm-houses scattered over the hills, and its old French *habitant* people. My own calling is that of a landscape painter and here I find many of my subjects, carrying a sketch-book always in my pocket.

About ten o'clock we turn off the highway and take a little winding, sandy road that dips and dips down to the river. Now we reach our first and favourite pool, that experience has taught us is very well worth a trial. The lower reaches of the river seem to be devoid of fish, or at least of trout. The road more or less follows the course of the stream for some miles, and we drive the car into an open clearing near the water, get out, don our waders, and put our rods together. The pool is a wide one, lying at the foot of a series of rapids. In its centre, a single huge flat-topped boulder stands out big as a small cottage. The water is here too deep to wade except at the upper end, so we borrow a rough home-made *chaloûpe* from the near-by farmer, and paddle out to the lee of the big boulder, casting toward the farther shore where the trout are usually lying. Almost at once my March Brown tempts a goodly fish, well over a pound, and he is netted after a respectable struggle. A better fish rises once, misses the fly, but refuses further enticement, and after a thorough but fruitless testing of the rest of the water we proceed upstream, scrambling over the rocks toward the next good pool, which lies between the head of the rapids and a log dam. On the way Tom hooks a small 'red' trout, about half a pound ; the only one of the day. The landing-net he is using

is of somewhat ancient vintage, and has been mended once or twice in a sketchy sort of manner. The fish, on being netted, discovers an exit through a couple of broken meshes, and, still hooked and on the line, makes for home again. Rather awkward this, but Tom lays down his rod on the rock, grabs the line below the net and, the fish being tired and not very big, handlines him back, managing to get him once more into the reversed net and thence to his creel.

At the upper pool a succession of round-topped stones fringe the shore at one bank. The water is streaked with wisps of creamy foam from the dam above. I drop a fly between two of the larger stones. A swirl and a break on the surface as the fly disappears! This is a real fish, as my bent rod testifies. The reel sings sweetly as the trout bolts madly for a deep holt under the tree roots. Praying the gut will stand up, I put heavy pressure on him and succeed in stopping him. Upstream this time he turns, thanks be, making for the deeps below the dam. I humour him a bit, and gradually regain line, eventually having the satisfaction of netting him; a good two-and-a-half-pounder.

It is now afternoon, and no more rises forthcoming, we feel it is time for luncheon. Our favourite lunching-spot is still farther upstream by three miles, but the intervening water is practically unfishable without the aid of a canoe, owing to surrounding forest. So we embark once more in the car, and drive round by the road, here making a big curve away from the water and then bending back and crossing it by a rough bridge over a wild ravine.

This is a place of wonderful natural beauty. A grove of silver birch trees stands over a sea of bracken. Below in the ravine, the river brawls over great broken masses of rock and drops over shelves into deep dark pools. Evergreen forest, sloping upward to the hills, forms a background to the scene. Here Tom insists on a bathe before luncheon, in one of the rock pools and then under the birches we unpack our food; hard-boiled eggs, 'bully' beef sandwiches, and a Thermos full of coffee. A kingfisher flashes down the stream. . . . A fat woodchuck waddles out of the bush, takes a look at us and retires. Then a heron flaps its way overhead. We are always hoping to see a bear (though just what procedure is the correct one to adopt, in the event, I am a bit hazy about), but although bears are occasionally killed in the district, one has not yet favoured us with a glimpse of his person. We once saw a freshly stripped bear-hide nailed up to cure on a barn wall.

Early afternoon fishing is, as a rule, not very profitable, so I

take a nap in the shade of the birches, and doze off to the music of the water and the rustle of leaves. Waking up later I find that Tom has disappeared, taking his rod with him. It is after four o'clock and there is now a better chance of a fish. I decide to go down-stream and have one more try for 'Moby Dick,' as his pool is just a few hundred yards below. But Moby is not having any, thank you, though I put on a small Silver Devon and afterwards some other 'gadgets' in an effort to tempt him. Ordinary trout seem to regard his domain as *tabu*, so my labour is in vain. Farther down I wander, following a narrow trail in the wood, and eventually come out into open fields and a farm. At this point the river is slow-flowing, and the trees having been cleared from the banks, it is quite easy to fish. Here it resembles parts of the Derbyshire Derwent. There is a good one rising at the bend! I switch to a dry fly, floating a Blue Dun over him. Good! He takes it, very easily and quietly, just sucking it down as it is sailing past. The water here is not, as a rule, full of dangers and one can play a fish rather easily. This one is making for the farther bank, but suddenly turns about and heads straight for me. Getting some slack he leaps, and has somehow broken away. Alas, for he was a good fish.

Working back upstream, I take a brace of smallish bass, just big enough to keep, and then regaining the ravine, catch sight of Tom perched on a boulder. He sees me at the same moment, waves a joyful greeting, and holds up what seems to be from the distance a very nice trout. So it proves, another two-and-a-half-pounder, or slightly over, and Tom, having also taken a couple of bass, is a very delighted boy.

We fish on in the ravine for a while but get nothing, except a few immature bass, which we carefully disengage, returning them to the water to grow up. Evening is drawing on, so we mount once more in the car and drive back to our first pool, where I feel fairly sure of getting another fish. Nor am I disappointed, as I strike a gallant fighter at the head of the pool. Under two pounds, he is the last and gamest fish of the day, twice leaping clear of the water before I finally slip the net under him. It is high time now for us to start back for Montreal. And although we have only five trout between us, and a few bass, the trout alone weigh about nine pounds.

Regretfully we take down our rods and drive homeward as night falls, a grateful feeling in our hearts towards the unknown benefactor who brought out the parents of these British fish so many years ago.

Montreal.

THE BARWICK STONE.

BY WINIFRED F. PECK.

I.

THE Reverend Joseph Hunter rose from his study chair and pushed aside his sheets of sermon paper, as he saw his wife disappear, with her basket and gardening scissors, into the walled garden. She was picking daffodils, no doubt, for the church vases, on this bright spring morning, and he had promised her to work at the sermon for to-morrow, but inspiration was sadly lacking, when far more engrossing affairs awaited him out of doors. 'April 16th, 1887,' he had headed his paper. 'All with one voice cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts xxix. 34)' he had written below. 'Such, my brethren, was the greeting of Ephesus to the Gospel, and it may interest us this morning to cast our minds back to the conflicting religions of the ancient world.' That was a beginning, at least, and a little walk would refresh him. Emma would understand, as she always did, he told himself, as, a little guiltily, he took down an old wide-awake, balanced on a pair of stag's antlers between college groups of earnest, whiskered undergraduates, and tiptoed past the kitchen garden down the Rectory drive.

Once clear of the laurels and the path across the churchyard the Rector became a new man. He strode along at a gallant pace, his coat-tails flapping, his eyes, behind their gold-rimmed spectacles, fired with the enthusiasm of the explorer. The long white road which led to the Deneshire downs was bare and dull on this cloud-swept morning, but to Mr. Hunter it was sacred as a Roman road. In his fancy he was a centurion commanding a line on its march, and he hummed, as he tramped, the tune of the *Dies Irae* to a marching pace. That the Church had borrowed that tune from the legions was a contention he had ably defended in the *Gentleman's Antiquarian Magazine*, to which he was a regular and honoured correspondent. 'Some men keep their heads in the clouds,' his wife would say, smiling, 'but my husband's is about ten feet beneath the ground level in Roman Britain.'

That was certainly true to-day as Mr. Hunter turned off the road to the quarry on the side of the downs. On the silent hill with

its big white scar, beneath the white spring clouds, the workmen sat over their steaming pannikins, and bright handkerchief bundles of food, like a cluster of birds over berries in a snowstorm. From amongst them, old Hodges rose to greet him, in gloomy triumph.

'Eh, sir, I've a proper find for you,' he said. 'I stopped the lads at their picks as soon as ever I caught sight of the stone away down there, that I did, but they'd cracked it a bit before I got at them. Still, there's the graving on it as clear as my hand, what got a nasty knock on it, dragging it out.'

The Rector clicked his tongue perfunctorily, as the scratched, grimy, blistered hand was presented to his view. His eyes were set on the stone, alight with excitement. Hodges was right, this was a discovery indeed. Some sixteen hundred years had passed since some Roman craftsman with his chisel had sat at work on the crisp turf, whistling to the song of the larks, carving out the epitaph. Whether his employer praised him, whether some mourner had wept over it in forgotten ages no one would ever know, but certainly its reappearance in the world was hailed by the unstinted excitement and interest of Mr. Hunter.

This then is what he saw.

The stone had been cracked by the workmen in three places, its sides and extremities broken and crumbled beyond hope of recovery. Intact in the centre was a roughly drawn pointed face, with staring eyes and conventional nose and mouth. Long ear-rings fell from conventional curves of waved hair, and a halo of rays surrounded the hair. Above it, just at a splintered gap, was a rough St. Andrew's Cross. The face was flanked on either side by crude representations, the one of a cock, the other of some unrecognisable animal standing on its hind legs. Beneath each of them was an oblong conventional design, and below that again, lost unfortunately to posterity, were two broken lines of lettering.

Claudia conj . . . ran the first, and—

Tulii . . . Renat . . . were all that were left of the second.

'Old it is,' said Hodges. 'Is it one of them Roman things?'

'Roman, yes, certainly,' said the Rector absently; 'but there is more in it than that, Hodges, much more. Dear me! If only we could restore that inscription! "Claudia, wife of . . . Tullius, Ren—Renat." If that missing word were "renati" we should have all the antiquarians of the country in a ferment. "Renatus," born again, is only used with reference to the cult of Mithra. But then the symbols are Christian, undeniably Christian—the cock for

the Resurrection, and the other animal—would you call that a bull, Hodges?’

‘Sheep, as likely as not,’ decided Hodges.

‘You have it, Hodges, the Lamb, the *Agnus Dei* . . .’ The Rector, lost in his musings, was only roused by an ostentatious groan.

‘Well, well, bring it most carefully to the Rectory, and Mrs. Hunter will see to your thumb. Here’s half a crown for a—well, for a cup of tea, and a shilling for the lad who helps you. Bring it this afternoon without fail, and I thank you, Hodges, I thank you!’

It was very late when Mr. Hunter came in to lunch, and his wife shook her head at his flushed cheeks and far-away look.

‘You’ve been on the war-path again, I fear, Joseph,’ she said.

‘Possibly, yes, possibly,’ agreed the Rector, attacking the joint (hot to-day and cold to-morrow, to ensure the cook’s attendance at church). ‘Yes, Emma, my dear, I may as well own that I played truant. But what a discovery, what a problem . . .’ His voice died away. All the way home his imagination had been at work, transfiguring the crude face of the sculpture into an image of dreams. The rough crinkles of the stone shone in his vision as a cloud of dark, mysterious hair, the round orbs as eyes full of the romance of all the ages. From Rome she had come, this unknown Claudia, from colonnades of gleaming marble, from her tiring table at a terrace window shaded by myrtles and oranges, from royal progresses in her chair, borne by slaves along the majestic streets of the Imperial City, here, to this lonely northern land, where her husband guarded his camp, on these solitary heights, from wolves and wolf-like men. And here, far from the home of her birth and dreams, she had died, no link between her and far-away Rome but the Faith illuminated by the symbols on the stone, of the cock who crowed at the dawn of Holy Friday, of the fishes who had seen the gleam of mysterious feet above them, walking the waters of Galilee.

‘*Requiem perpetuam dona ei*,’ he murmured, as he waved away the vegetables, and looked up to see his dear, pretty Emma with her neat golden hair and round rosy face, lit by her clear-sighted smiling eyes. ‘It is certainly a Christian monument!’

He locked himself into his study after lunch, and Mrs. Hunter heard no more of him till tea-time, when from her drawing-room she heard his voice admonishing two labourers in the churchyard.

‘Under the yew-tree, now, Hodges,’ he was saying, ‘but as soon as possible we must place it in the Chancel.’

'That's no place for this cruel stone,' grumbled Hodges, 'and Roman into the bargain.' Like the normal countryman of the day, Hodges was not a very good Christian but a very sound Protestant.

Mrs. Hunter was a lady of ready sympathies. After giving her best attention to Hodges' thumb, she gave it to the stone and to the Rector's explanations.

'I'm sure it's Christian if you think it is, Joseph,' she said. 'Only I don't believe you are quite sure, are you?'

'You know me too well,' said Mr. Hunter ruefully.

'Well, write and ask some of your antiquarian friends to come and see it and to help you to decide at once.'

'There's Professor Luke, of course,' said the Rector doubtfully. 'He's the authority on mystery religions, and Elver, he's a noted archæologist.'

'Was this Mithra a mystery religion?' asked Mrs. Hunter guilefully.

Her Joseph was shocked, for the first time in his life, really shocked with his wife, and easily led away to his tea while he enlightened her. Over the buttered toast he poured out to her the story of the faith which the Roman legions had brought back to Europe with them from the East. In Persia, Assyria and India alike they had heard of Mithra, the God, mediator between the Gods of Good and Evil, of Light and Darkness, whom the East had worshipped, with mystic rites of initiation, three thousand years before Christ. Mithra had been scourged and branded, also, and suffered to bring mankind back to God. All over the world the legions had carried the worship of their god, the god of war and victory, and between the god of the soldiers and the pale Christ of the missionaries had been waged a war to the death. And in their final conquest the Christians had revenged their faith by destroying every record, every document that told of the other fallen mediator. It was not till the Rector was quoting inscriptions from Borovicius on the Great Wall and from Chester: 'To the god invincible, Mithra, Lord of the ages,' that Emma interrupted him. Dusk was falling, the bell was ringing for choir practice and she must go, leaving the Rector to write to his friends to ask them their opinion of his great discovery.

Thus, therefore, was inaugurated the great controversy which was waged for months in the *Gentleman's Antiquarian Magazine* of that year, and lies now forgotten in the dusty pages of forgotten libraries, high on untouched book-shelves. The opening campaign

was waged in the churchyard of Barwick village, a few days after the finding of what was to be known as the Barwick Stone. Rain had been falling all day long, and the three antiquarians were protected by umbrellas as they stood beneath the thousand-year-old yew-tree which sheltered the monument. Beyond its dark fortress the setting sun shone on the daffodils and narcissi on the low graves, and the rooks circled noisily to their nests in the elms in the Rectory garden. They were doubtless occupied in disputes as to the origin of their nests, but their warfare was trivial compared with the battle beneath the yew-tree. For two hours the battle raged hotly between the archaeologist, small and bent after twenty years spent in excavations in Crete, and the Professor, big and overbearing after twenty years spent in lecturing to undergraduates. Between the two hovered little Mr. Hunter, flushed and excited in the defence of his discovery. That the symbols pointed to a Christian origin he grew more and more convinced as the balance of opinion weighed against him. One by one they were tested and found wanting in the opinion of the experts. The cock probably represented nothing but a connection with Gaul: Hodges' lamb might as easily represent a dog leaping up to catch the blood of the sacred bull: the so-called fish was nothing but a conventional ornament of the sculptor: the St. Andrew's Cross was probably intended for a star. And to both the judges the word 'Renatus' could apply only to an initiate, born again in the mysteries of Mithraism.

'Probably Mithraic,' said the archaeologist with finality. 'But you must guard it carefully, Hunter, and publish a full account of it.'

'Most assuredly Mithraic,' boomed the Professor. 'You say you think of putting the stone in your Chancel, Hunter? If I were Chancellor of your Diocese I should think it an unsuitable place for a pagan memorial!' said the Professor.

That remark, of course, settled the question, as Mrs. Hunter realised when she led the irate group out of the churchyard to an excellent lunch. The Rector possessed all the obstinacy of the habitually meek and undetermined man. Before the week was over the stone was installed on the North Wall of the Chancel, where the Rector's eye could fall upon it whenever he sat in his reading-desk.

That prospect was not, however, to be realised for many months. The chill which the Rector contracted in the controversy under the dank yew-tree developed into congestion of the liver, after days

spent in escorting visitors into the chilly little Norman Chancel to view the discovery. The Rector was so ill that for a week Mrs. Hunter never left the house, except to run across the churchyard to old Hodges' cottage by the lych-gate, to dress his thumb. How could she leave her husband when the trained woman who shared her charge was so careless and somnolent that the Rector arose, unheeded, one night, from his bed in a high fever, and made his way to the church? There his vigilant Emma found him, at midnight, trying in vain to break the locks, to see if the stone were safe. After that Mrs. Hunter packed off the woman, nursed her husband alone through pneumonia, and carried him off, convalescent, for a prolonged holiday. All that summer and autumn they visited the driest and most hygienic Roman ruins Mrs. Hunter could hear of in the South of Europe, undisturbed on their holiday save for weighty correspondence with the *Gentleman's Antiquarian Magazine*, and occasional depressing communications from the drab little locum tenens installed at Barwick. Mr. Hunter recovered his health and strength and all traces of his illness seemed over. There was, however, one of which neither he nor his wife had the faintest conception, and that was the private but unshaken belief of the little sleepy country town of Barwick that it was the evil influence of the unhallowed stone in the church which was responsible for the illnesses of the Rector and old Hodges.

The history of Superstition throughout the ages, when it comes to be written, will show many curious actions and reactions. The polite scepticism of the eighteenth century and the religious revivals of the early nineteenth, killed, or, rather, temporarily anæsthetised the superstitious beliefs of the upper classes of society in England. The lower orders imitated the incredulity of their superiors, and the wide spread of education seemed to complete the work. By the year 1887 no inhabitant of Barwick, or any but the remotest village of Great Britain, would admit to their betters any acquaintance with the legends of the countryside or beliefs of their forefathers. Houses and cottages might stand unoccupied, certain lanes remain unvisited after nightfall, and certain old women might be shunned like the plague, but for such phenomena there would always be some reasonable explanation. The Dene stood empty because it was damp, Gallows Corner was a nasty muddy bit of road, poor old paralysed Mrs. Minn was unpopular because she had a mischievous tongue. Such was all the local lore gathered by Mrs. Hunter in Barwick, and not yet had the lovers of old Eng-

land formed societies to investigate and preserve old traditions. These were guarded by old people as jealously as the coins in their stockings, from their betters and from contemptuous youth. Without open discussion and by obscure circumlocutions, however, it was firmly implanted in the public opinion of Barwick that the stone in the church never yet brought good luck to anybody.

There was not, naturally, therefore, the faintest suspicion in the minds of the *locum tenens* or of Mr. and Mrs. Hunter of any reason for the boycott of the church, when the sad little temporary incumbent apologised for the falling-off in attendances at church on their return to the Rectory, while the winter winds raged up the wide, cobbled, high street of the little town. 'You and your wife have been much missed, Mr. Hunter, and of course the services have been very dull since Miss Bones had to give up playing the harmonium. Her rheumatism has been growing worse ever since you left, and my wife, who took her place, is not very proficient. She asks you to forgive her too if the Rectory is not in as good order as we could have wished. She has found such difficulty in keeping her maids or in getting help from the local people.'

'Just inefficiency!' said Mrs. Hunter later, as she briskly set the new maids she had brought with her to spring-clean the Rectory, and set out herself on a round of visits to beat up the regular church attendants. There was, for a time, a flicker of revival in Church life, for the Hunters were universally beloved, until, just after Christmas, a choir-boy met with a skating accident, and old Hodges died of drink. By Lent the congregation consisted of only Mrs. Hunter and her maids, and on Easter Day the church was practically empty, as the maids and endless successors had disappeared from the Rectory, and Mrs. Hunter was struggling with the housework alone. By midsummer Mr. Hunter had effected an exchange of livings with a worn-out London incumbent, who was willing to undertake any duty, however difficult, in the peace and quiet of Barwick Rectory.

'There's one thing I want to say to you, Mr. Lyons,' said Mrs. Hunter, walking with the future Rector down the drive after the visit in which the exchange was finally settled. 'I want to give you a piece of advice, though I don't want you to mention it to my husband. It seems absurd, and I can't explain it to you, but I know I'm right.'

'Yes?' asked Mr. Lyons with mild surprise.

Mrs. Hunter looked round her to make sure they were alone, and then spoke out.

'Take away that Roman stone from the Chancel and put it elsewhere. For the good of the church I advise you to do so.'

'The stone? But the Rector showed it me as a great treasure!'

'I'm sure he did. I differ from him. Do you know country people at all? No? That makes it hard to explain to you why, as long as it stands there, they'll never come to church. Oh, they won't admit it! You could question and cross-question in vain. I've only made it out myself by a few vague hints and my own surmises. They believe the stone's unlucky. The old man who found it is dead, my husband was ill. There were two other stories of ill-luck I won't trouble you with, and, above all, I find, there's a tale in the village of a white figure in the churchyard, seen once, and that on more than one night people have heard the sound of feet marching and marching round the church, though there was no one to be seen in the churchyard. That I got simply by eaves-dropping at my own kitchen window, I must confess! It's no use your trying to combat their belief, they won't own to it. But they'll shun the church till the stone is moved.'

'But why doesn't Mr. Hunter move it?'

Mrs. Hunter sighed. She disliked explanations, but succinctly she told the story of the stone and of the quarrel over its origin. 'He would feel, you see, he was confessing that he was mistaken in its origin if he moved the stone from the church. His fellow-antiquarians would believe that he attributed it to Mithra worship. He'll never do that, so I persuaded him to leave. How can I stand by to see the church emptied because of a tiresome and very plain woman called Claudia, who died, in Heaven knows what faith, hundreds of years ago? Take my advice and put it in the stables if you aren't going to keep horses, and let it be forgotten.'

Mrs. Hunter felt doubtful about the impression she had made on the new Rector, until, that autumn, she received a letter from him, marked confidential. The stone had been removed, he told her, during the re-decoration of the church in August, and the services were now well attended once more. 'You will think me fanciful,' wrote Mr. Lyons, 'but it seemed to me as if I were on the outer fringes of the old contests of the Faiths, when I read aloud on Michaelmas Day: "There was War in Heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the old dragon."''

II.

During the forty years which followed the departure of Mr. Hunter, the Barwick Stone lay ignored and forgotten, save for the visits of a few archæologists during Mr. Lyons' incumbency. His successors were faced with more important problems in the mushroom-growth of Barwick during the early days of the vogue for bicycling. A pioneer chanced to inaugurate the industry in the environs of the sleepy little town, others followed him, and the place leapt from insignificance to prosperity. The inhabitants and the public-houses multiplied at a rate with which the little church of St. Wilfred found it hard to cope, and the work of the Vicar and his curates was hard enough even before the War, when the factories were employed in making munitions. No under-paid, over-worked Rector kept horses or cars in the old stables, and there, in a loft, forgotten and untroubled, lay the tombstone of Claudia. Only one link indeed was left of the world in which the stone had been brought to light. Mrs. Hunter survived her husband, the Lyons' and her contemporaries at Barwick. The year 1930 found her settled in her little house in Kensington, her memories of the past carefully stored away in lavender, for Mrs. Hunter was one of those old ladies who deserve and enjoy old age. She refused to live sentimentally in the past, and her unselfishness and vitality enabled her to live vicariously in the present and future of others. 'Aunt Emma,' said her great-nephew, Charles Sphere, 'deserves immortality. She can still order a good dinner and tell a good story.' Incidentally, she never looked at Charles in a way which hinted that she remembered him as a fat baby in a bath; and, as his hair grew thinner, and the phrase 'Quite!' replaced 'Oh rather!' in his vocabulary, she changed her manner of cheerful seniority to one of suitable deference to a rising young politician.

It was therefore to Aunt Emma that Charles applied for help when duty called him to Barwick as a speaker for the League of Nations.

'Some late magnate left a preposterous sum of money to the Corporation, with which they've erected a new and terrible town hall,' he explained, as he and his pretty young wife sat at lunch in Mrs. Hunter's gay little dining-room. 'It is to be opened on the fifteenth of next month, with trumpets also and with shawms, and I'm to give the address on the League to the honour of which our magnate dedicated this good work—as an atonement, I fancy, for

a fortune made in explosive bombs. The Municipality found it hard to spend all its cash, and is devoting one room to be a museum for local antiquities. They have little, I fancy, but odd coins and bits of broken pottery—I think some of the superfluous money has gone in genuine Birmingham antiques. But they have one authentic object of local fame, a Roman stone which they've extracted from the Rectory stables, where it was lying, according to local report, for a thousand years. The Rectory was built in 1880, so one suspects a slight inaccuracy. Do you know anything about it, Aunt Emma ?'

This was certainly one of the days on which Aunt Emma justified her nephew's tribute to her worth. Over the most intriguing fish soufflé, game and macedoine, the old lady held her guests interested and amused with the story of Uncle Joseph's discovery in the little, homely Barwick which had vanished so long ago.

'You're a gold-mine of information,' said Charles, as, over coffee, she took down the old dusty volumes of the *Antiquarian Magazine* in which the Rector and his opponents had waged their inky battle so many years ago.

'It's all too thrilling,' cried Leila, his wife. 'You should get a medium into touch with the stone at once!'

'Do you think so?' said Aunt Emma discouragingly. Her quiet, old-fashioned Anglican faith had survived the different entanglements of her younger generations in every sort of fancy religion. 'It's only a story of coincidences, after all!'

'Oh no, it must be more than that,' said Leila decidedly. 'Why, you say there was a story of a white figure in the churchyard!'

'I've always thought that was poor Joseph in his nightshirt when he was so ill. No one wore coloured pyjamas then, my dear!'

'But those steps round the church!' Leila's acquaintance numbered many young women whose interest in clairvoyance, palmistry and astronomy was as sudden and violent as their study of serious spiritualism was negligible, and she cast her thoughts round them now. 'Why, I heard the other day of a wonderful psychometrist who can get into touch with the past simply by touching any object which belonged to any dead person!'

'But nobody touches their own tombstone, my dear!' Mrs. Hunter spoke with distaste as she wondered vaguely if the Claudia of the mysterious stone had plucked her eyebrows, painted her lips and trifled with necromancers in Rome long, long ago. And behind her sophistication and make-up had she hidden, like Leila, a

pretty devotion to her husband and his interests, asked Mrs. Hunter with her usual scrupulous justice to modern youth.

'No, but then we must remember that all emotion is stored in etheric waves——'

'No, Leila, anything but that,' groaned Charles. 'I don't mind black magic, but I can't stand it when it's dressed in that imitation scientific jargon. Anyhow, darling, all that sort of thing is useless in this case. Suppose the whole yarn were proved true—suppose old boy Mithra, as your friends would call him, was really responsible for a septic finger in the sexton and a liver chill in Uncle Joseph and gave a touch of arthritis to the village organist, because he was sectarian enough to disapprove of a Christian edifice, how on earth can you get any kick out of him now? I mean to say, we've no historical authority that I know of to imagine that any pagan god would disapprove of municipal activities. He can't think that a mayoral soir  e is an orgy in honour of a rival god, or that the Gas Outfitters' Yearly Dance is a rite of initiation! His bolt is shot, and he'll be perfectly quiet and reasonable in Barwick Town Hall!'

'You're a sceptic, Charles,' said Leila reproachfully. 'I only feel that here, as so often nowadays, we're on the threshold of the unknown!'

Superstition is indeed an insidious foe. So Aunt Emma reflected as the past came back to her mind. It had died out before the spread of education, and before the growing materialism of the working-classes of England at last. Irrepressible, however, it had worked its way in again at the other extreme of society. Suppressed before the War, it had burst out into flower and fruit triumphantly in the four darkest years of England's history. Across the West End of London rose and fell wave upon wave of magic-workers, prophets and astrologers. It had summoned to its aid the antiquarians who were digging up the dying legends and songs and customs of the countryside. The new world might christen old magic as psychic forces, but the truth remained that what old Hodges and his friends believed against their will, Leila and her contemporaries made into their beliefs. The stone to which Hodges had vaguely attributed bad luck was becoming, by her sheer love of sensation, a Power of Evil to Leila's imagination.

'I must get someone down to test it,' she murmured, but Charles intervened.

'Not till after my meeting, my good girl! I don't want to lose

my reputation because you've been walking about the place with a couple of lunatics in sandals and beads! When it's over you can take them all down disguised as black cats or crystal balls or whatever you please!

Charles was one of those sensible husbands who win their way by compromise. Leila consented to keep away from the meeting any of her acquaintances, who were quite too thrilled by the marvellous story of the wizard old stone, but in return he agreed to drive her to the Town Hall, before they dined with a municipal magnate, so that they might view the stone at their leisure.

There is no less fitting background for any genuine antiquity than a museum, reflected Charles, as he stood shivering in the lofty room with a tessellated pavement dedicated by Barwick to the purpose. On a hillside, wreathed by thyme and hymned by larks, Claudia's memory might seem immortalised by the efforts of the sculptor. In the little chancel of the low, Norman church, to the chanting of the *Te Deum* amidst the scent of phlox from the altar vases, her name might tell of fragrant memories. But here, set in a niche on the wall, framed by gilt scrolls, dwarfed by pretentious pillars, sandwiched between a display case of fossils and a collection of Victorian medals, Claudia's image seemed almost vulgar, her emblems crude and comic. 'Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle,' murmured Charles profanely, as the Custodian switched on a bulb designed expressly to illuminate her absurd ear-rings and staring eyes, and even Leila obviously found it difficult to regard the stone with all that psychic awe and reverence she had been preparing in the car. They were glad to pass from the Museum through a door which led on to the platform of the central hall of the building.

'And I must say,' said Charles, 'she looks about as insignificant as I shall when I stand up to address all those chairs! I don't think much of Uncle Joseph's taste in women.'

'It dwarfs the interest to see it there,' admitted Leila, as they drove to the Rhododendrons, Walbrick Avenue, for the forthcoming dinner with the Barwick magnate. 'But, Charles, there really is something very vital and magnetic about the face. Anyhow'—as Charles laughed derisively—'there's all the background of her mystery! She still looks out there from the shadow of unknown gods.'

'I thought she looked a thoroughly Christian young woman!'

'I didn't. To me she seems to tell of the god of the legions, the Lord of War.'

'Well, she won't take any interest in the meeting then,' said Charles detachedly.

The words echoed in Leila's mind vaguely all evening, and recurred to her as she found herself seated on the shiny, draughty platform of the Town Hall with the prospect of two hours of boredom and stuffiness before her. In the room behind her, in darkness and silence, stood the memorial of the initiate of Mithra. Before her lay the large drab audience who had come to listen to impassioned addresses on the brotherhood of the nations, and the folly and crime of international warfare and aggression. In her hands was the form of ceremony chosen by the late donor of the Hall, a devout Anglican. The choir, led by the magnificent organ, were passing from the National Anthem to the hymn chosen by the departed.

'Make wars,' sang Leila decorously in her furs on the platform by Charles' side—

'Make wars throughout the world to cease,
Oh bind us in that heavenly chain,
Give peace, oh, God, give peace again!'

If in that stone lingered yet any malign influence of the soldier's god, surely evil forces must be assembling now, in protest against this cry to the pale Galilean, the Prince of Peace. What had eternal brotherhood to do with the unconquered Mithra whom the cohorts of Rome had worshipped on the windy moors of the Borders and the silent deserts of Arabia? Such were Leila's reflections just at the moment when the electric lights went out, leaving the Hall in total darkness.

'Don't worry, angel!' Charles, aware suddenly that Leila was clinging to him in inexplicable panic in the darkness, laughed reassuringly. 'Didn't you hear old Benson saying at dinner that he was afraid the installation was almost too complex and perfect? Look, here are candles, and no one's panicking! Cheer up, darling! This sort of thing always happens at opening ceremonies, you know.'

As the candles appeared on the platform, and the hum of conversation and laughter in the audience died down, Leila leant back in her chair, reproaching herself for her folly. Whether she had wholly recovered or not may be gauged from the fact that she had discovered herself as anxious to disbelieve as she had previously been to accept all the absurd old gossip about the stone. She tried to turn the current of her thoughts by attention to the

proceedings. Six candles already lit the platform, and by their light the Mayor was addressing the audience in a spate of words which suggested illimitable sources of supply. Around her the other speakers had sunk into attitudes of resignation. In the semi-darkness both they and the audience gave the impression of settling down into somnolence until the inevitable prelude was over. The Mayor's voice rose and fell so monotonously that, after ten minutes or so, she was persuaded that Charles, with his clear-cut face, slim figure and keen eyes, was the only man on the platform who was even pretending to listen. Like the persistent dripping of rain, the bland platitudes fell on the hall, and Leila herself must have succumbed to the prevalent drowsiness, according to Charles, and fallen into uneasy dreams. To that accusation Leila retorted indignantly that he himself must have been nodding if he had not heard the sounds which suddenly assailed her ears, as she sat there in weary boredom.

'Charles,' she muttered in a startled whisper, 'listen!'

Charles sat up quickly, and then turned his head. By his expression she knew that he heard now the sounds which she tried to believe were the creation of her imagination. In the room behind her echoed persistently the sound of footsteps, muffled by the intervening wall. Tramp, tramp, tramp, they resounded in her ears. Someone, something, assuredly was marching in the silent, empty void of darkness near her. Up and down, up and down the footsteps went, and at her memory of Aunt Emma's story Leila had to fight with her desire to scream aloud.

Charles had heard too! It was only when she realised this, as he looked enquiringly at the wall behind, that her terror became panic.

'Go and see what it is! You must go!' she whispered frantically.

Charles hesitated, not from any fear of the unseen, but in deference to the convention that every speaker should listen uninterruptedly to his companions in misfortune, and that it was hardly the thing to back away off an exit from the platform. But the circumstances were all in his favour. The platform was comparatively empty, as the stewards were still searching for candles, and the officials busy with the lights. The local magnates and clergy were still sunk in that profound meditation which no one would admit to be sleep. The Mayor, in full sail now, would never notice his absence, and anyhow something must be done for Leila, poor silly Leila, white and tense, the child Leila who had terrified herself with her own bogies.

'It's the organ pipes, I imagine,' he said vaguely, 'but I'll go and see if there's anyone in the Museum. But there isn't, you know!'

He disappeared very softly through the door into the adjoining hall, and Leila sat, turned towards him, breathing fast, her hands clasped tightly together.

From the Museum there came suddenly a rumble, a muffled cry and a loud crash and in a moment the whole hall awoke, galvanised to life. The Mayor stopped short, gaping, in a period, and above the rustle Leila heard her husband's voice raised in unexpurgated oaths.

When Leila, after a notably long period of silence, began to regale her friends with the story of the evening, she always declared that her husband had stumbled and fallen against the famous stone. It was a pardonable inaccuracy perhaps, for the case of Victorian medals into which he collided had really no connection with her tale. At the time, however, the actual cause of the accident mattered not at all compared with the fact that Charles had cut his forehead against the glass, that his nose was bleeding, not profusely but steadily and persistently, and that he himself was in a state of extreme fury and hostility.

'A doctor! I don't want a doctor. I want some water to stop this confounded blood. For Heaven's sake, Leila, get back to the platform, or they'll be bringing a coffin! I should be only too glad if you'd all go and get on with the meeting. If this beastly gash won't stop, Mr. Mayor, you must just ask someone else to speak. Dash it all! I can't speak on peace with a face like a prize-fighter!'

In spite of the ministrations of two willing doctors, Charles was unfit for appearance when the Mayor at length ended his speech. It was therefore, as Leila pointed out, through the direct intervention of the Barwick Stone that General Bullode was asked, for want of any other volunteer, to address the meeting.

Now of the speech which followed it is possible to offer all sorts of explanation. Charles, listening over his basin of water and iodine through the half-opened platform door, had no doubt that old Bullode had woken up from uneasy dreams to fancy himself at a recruiting meeting in 1914, and had spoken accordingly. Mrs. Bullode privately considered that anyone foolish enough to give her husband a chance of speaking in public could only expect the consequences. The officials of the League of Nations Union who

were present considered the whole affair a studied insult, and treated Charles with marked suspicion till he had atoned for it by spending a weary fortnight in Geneva in the following spring. The verdict of the meeting itself was expressed accurately enough by the local reporter, who stated that—"as the electric light obligingly resumed its functions, General Bullode, D.S.O., delighted the audience by a moving and impressive oration."

'But only one thing explains that speech,' said Leila afterwards to Mrs. Hunter. 'It was nothing but a sheer case of possession. Powers unknown to us—yes, indeed, Aunt Emma, mysterious agencies were present in that Hall. Why, you could watch them materialising in the General as he spoke! He began quite conventionally by saying that peace was a very good thing, of course, and that nations ought to live in amity together. He had many friends in other lands, he declared, and you could find heaps of white men in the Scandinavian countries and our own colonies. And then after that he flung back his grizzled curly head and fingered his moustache, and broke out, as if he couldn't help it, that we must remember peace wasn't everything! He began to tell us stories of all the campaigns he'd been in, those sort of straightforward tales everyone likes to hear, and hardly any soldier or traveller has the sense to tell simply and effectively. They'd only one point, of course—the good qualities displayed by the average man in a tight place. And what, he boomed out, made these virtues? Peace and plenty? Not a bit of it. It was war and adventure that made our Empire and made Englishmen. And then, darling, he went all St. Crispin's Day and Rudyard Kipling. You know, sometimes I think our fathers and mothers and schools made a mistake in educating all our generation! They smothered up the good, old, fire-eating patriotism business and made it a sort of indecent mystery, just as sex was in your times, Aunt Emma. So when you come upon it, all suddenly like that, it makes you go quite goosey with thrills up your backbone. Do you know, I don't believe I ever heard those words before—"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers?" Certainly not some Kipling poem he thundered out—

"Never the lotus closes, never the wild fowl wakes,
But a soul goes out on the East wind that died for
England's sake."

I didn't feel it in the least shame-making when he said that all

the blessings of prosperity were worth nothing compared with patriotism, and self-sacrifice, and honour which can never die ! In the end he swept us all round the Empire and talked of our conquests, and the very gallant gentlemen who had gone to their death, smiling, for their country's sake. Without a pause he got us all to our feet, and in a moment we were all shouting "Rule, Britannia !" at the tops of our voices, and I don't believe there was a person in that hall who wouldn't have stuck a knife into any foreigner who happened to be near him ! And that was the end of the meeting for the League of Nations ! With poor Charles shedding his blood for his country so needlessly in the Museum ! Now, Aunt Emma, can you have the faintest doubt any longer that there was some strange spiritual influence in the Hall that night ? Wasn't the Roman god of battles, or the power that inspired them, back amongst us out of the darkness of the ages ?'

'What does Charles think ?' asked Aunt Emma evasively.

'Charles !' sniffed Leila. 'He says nothing, of course. But he's so definitely opposed to my getting any mediums on to the affair that it's almost a confession of belief. All sorts of archaeologists are flocking to Barwick, I believe. They've revived all Uncle Joseph's quarrels about the origin of the stone. What's the good of that ? We should find out the truth the other way !'

'It's never easy,' said Aunt Emma decidedly, 'to find out the truth.'

And as the archaeologists are still waging a wordy warfare over the Barwick Stone, that remains the last word on the subject. Whatever god she worshipped, wherever her ashes are lying now, the monument to Claudia reposes in untroubled peace.

AT OSSIAN'S GRAVE—GLEN ANN.

Not in some great cathedral's vaulted aisle,
 Where kings and prelates strive for pride of place,
 In death's dim halls ; but on this cloud-kissed hill
 That breathes the incense of the flower-decked glen
 The warrior poet sleeps. His sentry, now,
 The wide-eyed wakeful primrose ; and his guard
 Soft-footed, gentle maidens of the mist,
 Who, clad in floating robes, diaphanous,
 Weep nightly by his quiet resting place,
 Yet whisper to the morn "He is not here" ;
 As angels, once, in dark Gethsemane,
 Kept vigil, till the dawning day revealed
 The empty tomb.

For Ossian is not dead :
 But merged, mysterious and impalpable,
 In all that was, and is, and yet shall be,
 Implicit in eternity's great womb.

The lightning's flash that leaps in sudden wrath,
 White-hot and quivering, from its darkling sheath
 Is Ossian's sword. The west wind's sobbing breath,
 Through blinding tear-drops wrung from riven cloud,
 Speaks Ossian's grief for war's sad aftermath.

His living essence interpenetrates
 The flaming sunset and the opal dawn.
 The scented thorn, that at the summer's call
 Eager and trembling dons her bridal veil ;
 Rich pendent jewels on the fuchsia's bough,
 Chaste silver and pale gold of willow wands,
 Sweet song of larks, the thrush's vesper hymn,
 Sun's splendour and moon's mystic loveliness
 Are Ossian's still ; being God's ; who holds all things,
 All men, all time, in His Infinity.

Belfast.

M. E. MORTON.

CHEETAH.

BY MARY GILLETT.

A BLACK earthen cooking-pot was standing comfortably in its ring of leaping flames, and Mundhi sat back on her heels before it enjoying the savoury smell of herbs brought fresh from the jungle that evening to give a relish to the thin rice that made her daily meal. She was good to look at, was Mundhi, with supple brown limbs, firm shoulders and a curly head erect and well set. Merry brown eyes and gleaming teeth redeemed the flatness of the nose and spreading nostrils. When she laughed or talked it was as gay a sound as leaves dancing on the Tilwan trees.

The day was over for Mundhi, a day of hard toil with other village women high up on the *dongre*, chopping wood and gathering broad leaves for dishes, and later, carrying on her head the heavy bundle, through the jungle and across the valley as the sun went smouldering behind the western hills. She had worked hard all day, and as she swung along with the other women, single file, axe in hand, superbly erect, joking and laughing all the way in spite of her weariness, she thought how good it would be to sit in the firelight within her little hut of mud and grass, the child playing by her on the floor and the rice bubbling for supper in the big black pot.

Poor as she was, for her lazy, good-humoured husband owned no buffalo or bullock for ploughing, she was happy and contented. Had not *Bhagawan* in his mercy sent her, only a year from her marriage, as beautiful a son as ever the village had seen. Now, at four years old, her little Somalu was the joy of all his family; a small sprite of a boy, as agile as a monkey, as talkative as the ubiquitous green parrot, and as soft and lovable as only a child can be.

Her man came stumbling into the hut, a little merry after an unaccustomed bottle of *toddy* earned by carrying heavy loads of firewood down to the Sahib's bungalow. The rice being set out on leaf plates sewn with twigs, short work was soon made of it with eager fingers. Then, the leaves burnt, the mud floor swept clean of fallen rice grains, and a dried dung cake left to smoulder on the fire, Mundhi spread a mat for herself and the boy and was soon

asleep, the sound easy sleep of the jungle-dweller. Her man stretched himself on the only string bed, too sleepy with the hot food and heady liquor to remember that the outer door in the yard was left ajar.

Inside, all was peace. The fire had died into a wisp of acrid smoke, and the only sound to be heard was the regular breathing of tired people and an occasional scrabbling of rats in the thatch. But outside the world was wide awake. A bird in the Silk-Cotton tree sang without ceasing 'tzee, tzee, tzee, tzee!' Jackals made a circle of hideous wailing beyond the village; farther off undistinguishable voices joined in their mighty hunting-chorus. The little lane which straggled between two rows of grass-thatched huts stood silent and empty. But not for long. Faint at first, but louder as he sped out of the jungle towards the huts, came the decisive, surly grunt of a cheetah. Inside the headman's byre, safely barred, were many young goats, but the cheetah could find no entry there. Grunting his dissatisfaction, he sped catlike to the house of the *ahir*, the village herd, whose hens had supplied the cheetah before with a good supper—but the *ahir* had learnt wisdom to-night. The great cat wandered on until he came to Mundhi's hut, where he knew of old that there was nothing to interest a cheetah. But to-night, finding the strong outer door a little open and being both inquisitive and hungry, he glided in and silently nosed round the yard where a few empty baskets and pots stood. No young goats bleated in terror at his presence, and no fat hens huddled closer in their corners, but near the open door of the centre hut something stirred. Very cautiously the cheetah moved towards it. There in the doorway lay Somalu, sleeping peacefully, his naked body curled up, knees to chin. Restless in the sultry night he had rolled off his mat nearer the cooler air outside the hut.

The cheetah paused. How small and desirable the child looked. But it was bad policy to interfere with man or man's young. He crept nearer. All was so silent and the child so little, it would be the work of a minute to snatch him up and rush with him to the enveloping jungle. The hungry cheetah lifted his whiskered nose and sniffed, then quickly he pounced, and catching Somalu by one shoulder in his strong teeth made for the open door. The terrified child screamed madly, and Mundhi, wide awake in an instant, jumped to her feet and, without waiting to try and waken her torpid husband, snatched up her axe and rushed after her precious son.

It was a moonless night and Mundhi could see no black cat-form,

but a little way ahead her boy was moaning with fear and pain as the cheetah carried him away and away.

It was no distance to the jungle now, and Mundhi's terror lent wings to her bare feet. The cheetah found a boy of four no light weight. He knew, too, the punishment that would meet him from that bright axe if the woman overtook him. Mundhi could still see nothing, but just ahead of her the moaning sounded louder than before. Rushing on, heedless of snakes in the long grass, she almost stumbled over her child lying where the cheetah had dropped him before he disappeared into the deep forest.

Mundhi snatched up the bleeding, unconscious child, and choking with sobs she stumbled with him against her breast back to the village, now astir. Her husband, still befuddled with sleep, was standing in a ring of villagers, trying to tell them how he had awakened to find his wife and child gone, the door open, and in the distance the sound of shouts and moaning. As Mundhi staggered into the hut they all followed her, but she crouched in a corner, rocking her child and moaning as she tried to staunch his wounds on the ends of her coloured *sari*. A neighbour kindled the fire and lit a floating wick in the clay lamp. Then they all sat waiting, and watching the child, scarcely knowing whether he was dying or dead. After a time Somalu opened his eyes and began to cry in a little plaintive voice. His mother comforted him in the only way she knew, giving him her ever-ready breast, for in the jungle poverty keeps a child dependent on his mother for suitable food for several years.

The father squatted in miserable silence beside the fire, but Mundhi, seeing that her son had strength to drink, was content.

The dung cake glowed in the *chula*, rats scampered in the roof, and the mother sat as still as death nursing her sleeping child; while out in the jungle a hungry cheetah grunted his displeasure.

THE MAN WHO MOVED THE MOUNTAINS.

BY G. M. T. PARSONS.

THERE was once a man who lived on a plain encircled on one side by mountains and on the other by the sea. The sea was only a day's journey away, but its restless comings and goings did not trouble the man, for he had never been down to look at it. He had no business to take him there and no curiosity to make him go. The mountains were two days' journey, and the man was glad they were so far, for he was frightened of them. They looked to him when he sat at the door of his farm like a line of giants ranged along a bench, and he had given them all names. They were Greybeard and Wryneck and Squint-Eye, Big Tod and Wrinkle-pin. Wrinkle-pin was the least human-looking, being only a long, dented ridge, but the others were so real to the man that he sometimes forgot they were mountains and thought of them as people; for he had begun to have queer fancies from living so much by himself.

His favourite companion was the river that flowed by his door. It was a thick and weed-choked stream, that coiled sluggishly over the plains to his farm and then slid down to the sea. Although it flowed placidly it was dangerous, for it was deep, and the banks were soft and boggy, giving no foundations for bridges and greasy foothold at fords. The man's farm stood on mud brought down years ago by the stream, and the soil was so rich that his crops grew with very little care from him. He therefore became lazy and fat, worked only to keep himself fed, and sat longer every day at his door, watching the distant hills and listening to the oily murmur of his river.

Sometimes he was forced to go to market, and then he met people and talked with them; sometimes a stranger from beyond the mountains would reach the far side of the river and shout across to the farm, and then the farmer would get out a boat and ferry him to the road. But the town was a long way away and the man too lazy to go often to market, strangers were rare and no one else troubled to come out in that direction; so he lived by himself day in day out with little to do and only his river to talk to.

For many years he was comfortable enough, though the waste and disorder of his farm would have shocked other men, but at last came a season of drought when all his crops failed, and then a very wet year when his cattle died of disease. And by this time he was so poor that he had no money to buy more.

'What shall we do?' he said to the river, for he often spoke aloud to her. He imagined her such a woman as his wife had been, fat and rather frowsy, but quiet enough to live with.

The river wheezed and gurgled but gave no other answer, yet the next day the man found a stranger face downwards in the mud. He was evidently a traveller from beyond the mountains who had got caught in a bog-hole and died of exhaustion trying to drag himself out. His wallet was full of gold, and when the man discovered this he stuffed the money in his own pockets and pushed the body into the river. It rolled over once or twice and then disappeared in midstream.

This piece of luck put an idea into the man's head, and from that time forward he and the river went into partnership. The man contrived to murder every traveller who came that way, and when he had stripped the bodies of their money and their jewelry he threw them into the water and the river carried them away. Four times he did this successfully, and none asked after the dead, but the fifth time he killed an old man and a little boy who came shouting for a boat after dark, and when he looked at the bodies in the morning he felt sure he had done wrong. They carried very little money but many packets of letters; the old man seemed to be a nobleman and the child was strangely beautiful. The farmer was certain now that questions would be asked, so he buried their things in a corner of the garden and disposed of the bodies as before.

A few weeks after this a party of horsemen clattered up to the farm. They had crossed the river by a ford upstream, they took the farmer unawares and in a trice had made him prisoner and bound him up to a tree. Then they began to question him about the old man and the boy, but he was so terrified at their coming and so bewildered by seeing many strangers at once that he hardly understood what they said and at last they took him for an imbecile. They ransacked the house for proofs of guilt but could find none, and in the end they grudgingly set him free.

'Yet I have a good mind to hang him all the same,' said the leader of the band. 'These greasy fellows of the plains are all liars.'

'Oh sir, may your mountains fall on me if I tell aught but the truth,' cried the man, finding his voice at last.

As he spoke there came a roar from the hills, but it was drowned in the noisy laughter of the soldiers; for the man was a mountain of flesh himself, and they vowed he had chosen a fitting death. They rode away jeering, but they left the farmer mightily discomposed. His agitation lasted all night: he slept fitfully, waking up with jerks that shook the whole bed, and then lying with his great body quivering like a jelly under the blankets. Every creak and whisper in the house made him sweat with terror, and in the distance he heard unaccountable thuds and grumblings that added to his fear.

When morning came he was much too nervous to go out to work. It was a grey and heavy day, and he sat at his door, staring into the mists and biting his nails. Later in the afternoon the sky brightened and the man began to grow calm. He went inside and found something to eat, then he came back to the door. A sunset light flooded the plains; the levels stretched away into the distance rich and mellow as he loved to see them. Peace came again to him, and he flung himself back in his chair and looked at the distant hills. Then his jaw dropped and his eyes bulged with terror. For it seemed to him they had moved.

He rubbed his eyes and looked again, he walked round the house and came back, he tried to fancy that the mists were playing a trick on him. But nothing could alter his feeling that Wryneck had slipped nearer Squint-Eye, and that Greybeard was staring at him from across the plains.

For days the man hardly left his door, but sat looking at the mountains. For days the mountains stayed as they were, making no more movement. At last the man decided that they had never shifted, and he began to turn his mind to other things. Winter was coming, and he had to go in and buy stores at the market. This was always a great event for him, and in the absorption of buying and selling he forgot all about his fears till, as he was riding home again, he suddenly saw the tops of the hills above the roofs of his farm. There was no doubt about it, they had left their places and were making across the plain towards him in a rough semicircle.

The man rushed home and slammed the door behind him. All through the winter he lived like a beast in its lair, eating the provisions he had brought with him and everything he had stored.

He never left the house, but sometimes he peered out of the window and sometimes out of a little trap-door in the roof. One morning when he lifted the trap the awful face of Greybeard looked down on him from the sky. The man gave a squeal of terror and rushed to the window. No light came through it now, for it faced straight on to a mountain-side. Then at last he opened his door and found that the mountains had hedged him in. They stood so close on either hand that he could hear the noise of their waterfalls above the rush of his river, their terrific pressure had crumpled and dented his fields, blocks of stone had fallen into his pastures, and his placid stream had become a mountain torrent foaming over rocks.

'Escape while you can,' roared the river when it saw him. 'There may be worse to come.'

But the man looked up and down the valley and saw that his house was safe. The mountains could not crush it because the base of Squint-Eye to the east did not fit exactly into the base of Greybeard on the west, nor could Wryneck to the north fill the gaps between them. Big Tod lay to the south, Wrinkle-pin was missing, and between Big Tod and Greybeard was a way of escape, the gap where the river rushed to the sea. The man had grown even more sluggish during his months indoors, he decided he would not stir until something further happened.

The next day his river overflowed, and he woke to find the floor of his house awash.

'Are you turning against me?' he cried to her in anger.

'I can't help myself,' said she. 'Wrinkle-pin is coming round between the pass and the sea. If he dams my way I shall flood the valley till I drown the farm. I think this is what the mountains intend, so you had better shift.'

'What shall I do?' cried the man. 'If I go out to the plains they will follow me and crush me.'

'Where I flow into the sea there is a church,' said the river. 'A holy man lives in it, perhaps he may protect you.'

So the farmer left the valley without more ado. The journey was terrible; he bruised and cut himself on the rocks, twice he was almost swept away by avalanches from the slopes, once a great boulder fell and knocked him into the river; but at last he reached the plains and got to the church. It was a poor little building at the edge of marshes, protected from the sea by the remains of an old wall. The holy man was building up the wall with loose stones, and seemed impatient at being disturbed in his work.

'You may certainly shelter here if you will help me,' he said when he heard the farmer's story. 'You seem to be a strong man and can do good service.'

'What do you want me to do?' asked the farmer.

'We must keep the sea-wall built up,' replied the hermit. 'If the wall goes, the sea will devour the church. There was once a town here with seven churches and many inhabitants, but the sea-wall broke and the tide came in, and now there is nothing but marsh-land. This church is safe so far, I have spent my life protecting it. Every day the tide washes away what I have built the day before, but with two pairs of hands at work we shall do well.'

The farmer said he was very tired and would decide in the morning. Secretly he thought he would find better shelter, for the idea of building up a wall with stones did not much please him, and he thought the hermit a fool for his pains.

In the morning, however, he found that the mountains had decided for him. They had followed him again and now stood in a rampart outside the church-lands waiting to crush him if he set foot beyond consecrated earth. And when he went to look for the hermit he found him praying beside a row of graves.

'The poor souls laid here were brought to me by the sea,' said the holy man. 'I found them near the sand-bar where the river drops its burdens. They must have come downstream and been washed this way by the tide. I often wonder why no one comes asking after the bodies, for many of them, I fear, were foully murdered. The last was a pretty boy—it would have made you weep to see him. I am loath to let the sea come in and disturb these graves.'

'What!' cried the man aghast. 'If the sea broke through, would the dead come to the light again?'

'I fear it,' sighed the hermit. 'I have seen it happen.'

The man turned pale and without another word bent down and began to lug at a stone. All day long he worked, and if I do not lie he is working there still. He has grown thin enough, for the sea still washes away one day what has been piled the day before. And if he pauses in his work to look over his shoulder he sees the mountains laughing at him.

ROYALTY AND A GOVERNESS.

BY B. DEW ROBERTS.

IN the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, an old lady, Miss Catherine Davies, was living in very humble circumstances in Beaumaris. It is unlikely, considering her age and her state of health, that she continued to live there for much longer; she suffered from an incurable paralysis of her neck, so that she had to use her hands to hold her head upright. In the days when teaching the young was often the last resort of inefficiency, the only profession open to a lady obliged to earn her own living, a retired governess was often a figure of rather pathetic insignificance. But Miss Davies had not been quite an ordinary governess. In a small way, and in that small place, she was rather a personage; and the great families of the neighbourhood showed her much kindness.

Miss Davies was one of a large family, so large that it conferred on its members some small title to celebrity. Her father had married twice, and had no less than thirty-three children. His daughter Catherine was born at Beaumaris in 1773. To that quiet little town, which, of the three 'English Boroughs' planted by Edward I on Welsh soil, has alone managed to keep some of its English and feudal character, she returned to end her days. But in between . . . she had shared in the splendours and misfortunes of kings, had lived in palaces, and had sheltered in a foreign fortress from bombardment by the navy of her own country. She had been for 'Eleven Years in the Family of Murat, King of Naples.' Some of her friends persuaded her to write an account of her experiences, under this title, which they published by subscription, in order that the writer's poverty might be relieved by the profits arising from the sale of the little work. One hopes that its publication had that effect; but it had also another, unforeseen by Miss Davies. No author of a printed book can ever be quite sure of oblivion; and a stray copy, one of the waifs of literature that shelter obscurely in old libraries and second-hand bookstalls, has survived to bring her back to life long after her very name has been forgotten in her native town.

But the same qualities which enabled her to fill her post so

admirably were a handicap when, as she would have said, she took up her pen. Nothing could be more stilted, more matter of fact, and more unassuming than her account of her adventures. Only her own character draws itself. She moves among those upstart kings and princes, a prim, self-possessed, intrepid British governess, enjoying luxury when it came her way, hating dangers and hardships, but devoting herself to her charges through both with an absolute loyalty.

Her father, she explains, had suffered severe though unforeseen misfortunes. No doubt he considered that the size of his family was one. In consequence, his children were obliged at an early age to make their own way in the world. Miss Davies, when only fifteen, was placed in a merchant's family in Liverpool. In 1802, soon after the Peace of Amiens, she was offered another post. Some English people took her out to Paris with them, as governess to their little girl. When war broke out again, all the English in France were detained as prisoners of war. This was a blow to her employers, who could no longer afford to keep up their establishment in Paris, and were obliged to move into a very humble lodging. However, through their influence, Miss Davies was admitted into the household of Napoleon's sister Caroline, the wife of General Murat.

Madame Murat liked the English, and she had also engaged another Englishwoman, Mrs. Pulsford, to look after her children. She treated them both with great kindness, but some of the French servants did all they could to slight and annoy the foreigners. Napoleon also disapproved of two British women remaining in his sister's household at a time when he was planning to invade their country; and he ordered her to send them home. But Madame Murat did not wish to lose them, and instead of obeying this order, she simply hid them away. For three months they had to remain unseen indoors. Then, after his coronation, Napoleon moved his Court to Fontainebleau, and there Murat and his wife, now the Princess Caroline, with their children and their suite, followed him. One day the Emperor looked up and saw Miss Davies with the children at a window.

'Ah, you English there?'

She replied: 'Yes, Sire.'

Presently he and the princess entered the room.

'The Emperor said to me, "You English are not good." I replied, "Sire, there are some of the English good, and some bad,

as well as the French." "Do you," he asked, "like the French as well as the English?" "Sire," I replied, "if I were to say I liked the French as well as the English, I should think myself a hypocrite; but I like those of all nations who are kind to me." His Majesty tapped me on the shoulder, and said, "Bravo! bravo! I like you, because you are so candid."

It was no timid little mouse of a woman who could answer the greatest person in Europe so calmly. Reported conversations must often be inaccurate, but it is impossible to suspect Miss Davies of putting down, not what she really said, but what she wished afterwards that she had said. Her honesty is too transparent.

After that nothing more was heard about sending the two Englishwomen home.

In 1808 Napoleon set his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne, and made Murat King of Naples in his place. 'Upon this new and exalted arrangement taking place, the Queen enquired of my English companion and myself, if we had any objection to accompany her to Naples. We gladly embraced the offer of remaining with them.' While the new King and Queen remained behind in France to settle their affairs, the children set out on their journey, with a suite which had increased in proportion to their new dignities, and was now headed by the chief governess, the Duchesse de Rochmo, the second governess, the Countess Picherno, 'a niece of the late Lord Byron's,' and the third governess, the wife of a general. Miss Davies' real position in this household was probably more that of a nurse or nursery governess. The children and their attendants travelled in four carriages, accompanied by an armed guard.

In Rome Miss Davies became so ill that she had to be left behind in the palace where they had been lodged, attended only by two Italian women whose language she could not understand. The doctor also could only speak Italian, so they fetched in the postmaster, who knew French, to act as interpreter. She was still there when the King and Queen passed through Rome on their way to Naples, and the Queen left strict orders that every care should be taken of her. In about a month she was able to rejoin the royal household.

And now Miss Davies began to feel that she was living in a fairy tale. She, who had begun her career so humbly in that merchant's family, here found herself surrounded by 'everything

that could delight the eye or please the ear'—by the light and beauty and enchantment of Italy, and by the state and luxury of Court life. The ancient palaces of the Bourbons, lately neglected and full of tawdry old furniture (which would very likely seem beautiful to-day), were now adorned by the Queen's fine taste with 'all the elegant improvements of the present time.' The royal family moved from one to the other; they made delightful excursions; Miss Davies rejoiced in the affection of her young charges and the esteem of the Queen. The Neapolitans were also delighted with their handsome new King and the gaiety and magnificence of his Court—all except some sixty disaffected persons, who formed a conspiracy, fortunately discovered in time by a French spy, to murder the whole royal family in their beds. The ringleaders were executed, the others were cast into dungeons, and the round of pleasure went on.

Gossip and scandal cannot have been unknown in this gay Court. (It was, for instance, an accepted fact that the Queen had lately been the mistress of Metternich.) Miss Davies repeats none, and makes no criticisms. Was she too discreet, or had she none to make? She had, most likely, the kind of simplicity, less rare then than now, that instinctively respects anyone highly placed. Gold or tinsel, the glitter of royalty dazzled her a little. But she seems to have had a real admiration for Murat. He was so handsome—'the most princely man I ever saw'—his countenance was so mild and benign, his manners so elegant, he was so devoted to his family; and, in the end, so unfortunate. When his wife was summoned to Paris to be present at Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise, Murat spent hours playing with his children, and could hardly bear them to be out of his sight. The Queen was away for nine months, and it was supposed that Napoleon was trying to urge or to force her to follow his own example, and discard her present husband in order to become the wife of 'some high-born potentate.' Though she resisted and resented such suggestions, her absence had brought home to King Joachim the precariousness of his position as a mere pawn on Napoleon's chessboard, liable at any moment to be pushed aside. The Emperor had never thought much of Murat's intelligence, apart from his unquestioned bravery in the field; and later he was to write to Queen Caroline that elsewhere her husband was as weak as a monk or a woman. He also complained of his *singeries*. Certainly, as Miss Davies says, King Joachim dearly loved his

joke. For instance, when the royal family breakfasted in an elaborate dairy attached to the palace, in which a shower of water could be released to cool the air, the King often secretly turned on the tap, and was delighted when his guests, unexpectedly drenched to the skin, were obliged to retire to change their wet clothes.

The Court spent some part of every year at Portici, a palace in very beautiful surroundings, some miles outside Naples. There was a pavilion in the park, built during the short reign of Joseph Bonaparte. In the upper room a large and curiously contrived table had been placed, round which twelve persons could dine unattended by servants. There were openings in this table worked by springs, through which the plates and dishes were removed and sent up.

'The King . . . one morning, at a breakfast in the pavilion, surprised and amused his guests, among whom were some of the English nobility, by having a pair of dwarfs served as the middle dish at the dessert. They came up through the aperture in the table, resting quietly in their china car; and when safely landed, they rose up, and lightly tripping along the table, presented an offering of flowers to the royal pair. Their unexpected and ludicrous appearance drew peals of laughter from the light-hearted guests.'

There is no doubt that of the two the Queen was more fitted to rule than her husband. She had a fair share of her brother's ability and ambition, and (it is Miss Davies' one word of criticism, which is also endorsed by history) was 'somewhat fond of manœuvring.' When Murat went with Napoleon on the Russian campaign, the Queen was so absorbed in affairs of state that often, for a fortnight together, she neither saw nor enquired for the children. It was not necessary, she would have said; she had taken care to see that they were in good hands. Everything about the palace was admirably and regularly ordered. The children were surrounded with great state, but their lives followed a strict routine, and they were not over-indulged. Miss Davies had charge of the elder boy, Prince Achille, until he was old enough to be taught by tutors; and then the youngest, the little Princess Louise, was placed under her care.

The Russian campaign had widened the breach between Murat and his master. A general who is also a king can hardly fail to resent very deeply being censured by his emperor in a public

bulletin. After Leipzig he deserted Napoleon's cause; and in January, 1814, he signed a separate peace with Austria, deluded by Metternich's promises to secure his title to the throne and to force Ferdinand IV, the deposed Bourbon king, to renounce his rights. As a result of this treaty, Great Britain ceased to be officially at war with Naples, and a British fleet was allowed to enter the bay. Miss Davies and Mrs. Pulsford visited one of the ships, and were moved to tears at finding themselves once more among their own countrymen, and feeling themselves almost on British soil again. Miss Davies was still more delighted to find a Welsh midshipman on board. True, he came from the other end of Wales, but one's country contracts when one is far away from it, and Cardiganshire seemed to have drawn surprisingly near to Anglesey. Then, on the birthday of King George III, salutes were fired from the British fleet and were answered by the guns of the Neapolitan forts, and she and Mrs. Pulsford were again most handsomely entertained on one of the frigates.

'Upon our return, my young princess was at the piano. She requested me to sing "God save the King." I immediately began to do so; but was quickly desired to cease, the dear child innocently declaring that my singing put her piano out of tune.'

The Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline, took this opportunity to visit Naples. (This was after the Commission appointed in 1800 to enquire into the reports of her conduct had acquitted her of any serious fault, but had censured her for certain indiscretions.) The King and Queen had a palazzo specially prepared for her; and when she was invited to dine with them, the two Englishwomen were commanded to prepare tea exactly in the English fashion—a process not so unusual in that Court as one might imagine, for the Queen of Naples was herself very fond of a real English tea, with muffins and crumpets. The Princess, however, was naturally surprised to find English tea, properly made, so far from home; and when the presence of the two British governesses was explained, she asked that they should be presented to her. She enquired, in English, whether they were happy. Miss Davies answered that their majesties were so kind that they could not be otherwise. When this was translated to the Queen, 'she replied, that to her children we were a treasure, from the affection we evinced towards them, and the unceasing care we took of them; and that she relied with the greatest confidence upon

our fidelity to herself and family. Such an opinion was highly gratifying.'

The Princess remained in Naples for four months, and the two governesses were present at the many magnificent entertainments given in her honour. Miss Davies declares that during this time she saw nothing of the levity with which the Princess of Wales was so freely charged.

Some years afterwards, when she was living her quiet invalid life at Beaumaris, she was summoned to London in 1820 on account of the impending trial of Queen Caroline of England. She was told that she might be required as a witness to the Queen's conduct during the time that she had known her in Naples. A solicitor took down her evidence; however, when the trial took place she was not called.

But at the Court of Naples the days of wine and roses, of balls and popularity and comic-opera uniforms were now nearly over. Those who had known the Europe of those years must almost have ceased to believe in peace as anything but a lull between storms. Another storm was brewing, and the Princess of Wales fled before it to Egypt. By this time Murat had fallen between two stools. The Allies refused to recognise his title; and at Vienna Talleyrand pretended not to know 'the man' referred to as the King of Naples. Then Napoleon escaped from Elba, and like a magnet drew Murat back to his old allegiance. In March, 1815, he mobilised his Neapolitan army and marched north, proclaiming—some fifty years too soon—the cause of a united Italy. In a disastrously swift campaign he was defeated by the Austrians and deserted by his own troops.

Of all this the children and their governesses knew nothing, until one day they were suddenly ordered by the Queen to put together a few things for a short excursion. Miss Davies only learned by chance from a friend that the Austrians were supposed to be advancing on Naples, and that this little excursion was, in fact, flight. The Queen had decided to send her children for safety to the strong fortress of Gaeta, about forty miles up the coast. Their preparations were hurried, and there was not room in the carriages for much luggage. To her lifelong regret Miss Davies was obliged to leave behind most of her possessions, including many of the valuable presents which she had received from time to time from the royal family. The children also seemed to understand that there was something fateful about this sudden

departure; there were tears in their eyes when they assembled in the drawing-room before starting, as though they guessed that this was likely to be their farewell to Naples. Then there were delays; a report had reached the palace that bandits were awaiting them on the road. At last the party, which included their grandmother, Madame Bonaparte, and their uncle, Cardinal Fesch, set out at midnight with a guard of twelve volunteers; but when they were well on their way they were halted in open country and warned not to proceed till daylight. Meanwhile some of the bandits had been captured. They arrived safely at the fortress of Gaeta, where the governor received them with great respect, and put his house at their disposal.

A ship was waiting to take Madame Mère and the Cardinal back to France. They had wished to take the children with them; but the Queen had decided that they were to remain at Gaeta. This ship was chased for a time by an English frigate, until the captain, hearing that Madame Bonaparte was on board, courteously allowed her to proceed.

As a place of refuge Gaeta had its disadvantages. Owing to the British blockade, the provisions and ammunition which the Queen sent from Naples often failed to reach the fort, and there was a real shortage of food for the garrison. Then, after an engagement between some British and Neapolitan ships, an English officer landed to demand the surrender of the fort. The governor refused, and the British ships opened fire. The children and their attendants were hurried for safety into an extremely damp cave below the fortress. In the deadly chill of this cavern, where water dripped from the rocky walls, they spent the greater part of the next seventeen days, emerging whenever there was a lull in the firing only to have their sleep and their meals interrupted as soon as the bombardment was renewed. The four children were cooped up in the body of an old carriage, which had been placed in the cave as some kind of shelter from the damp. In this motionless vehicle, wrapped up in all the blankets and clothes available, they had to spend long hours without food or distraction. Miss Davies praises their royal courage and patience; and has a word of contempt for one of the French ladies who, when the balls began to fly overhead, put her fingers in her ears and would not stop screaming. But exposure to the unwholesome atmosphere of the cave soon told on the children's health. They all had bad colds; and upon Miss Davies the damp had much more serious effects,

which ended in a lasting infirmity. 'The muscles of my neck,' she says, 'became so contracted, as to render me for the future unable to support my head without the assistance of my hands.'

Meanwhile, in that summer of 1815, the Queen was trying to hold Naples for her husband. Once he returned there, disguised and a fugitive. It is said that he faced her with the announcement: 'Madame, I have not been able to find death.' He was to find it later in that same year when, after more wanderings and escapes, deserted by his last followers, he faced a firing-squad at Pizzo in Calabria.

Murat never saw his wife again. Soon after he left Naples for the last time, the Austrians entered to restore Ferdinand IV, and the Queen was told that she was to be conveyed to Trieste on a British ship, the *Tremendous*, of seventy-four guns, on her way to Vienna as a prisoner of war. 'Dressed in a Waterloo blue habit, and mounted for the last time on her beautiful charger,' she bade an affectionate and tearful farewell to the volunteers who had remained loyal to her, while she stroked her horse's neck with her diminutive hands—the famous hands, so small that those of the little Princess Letitia, when a child of seven, were said to be the same size as her mother's.

The Queen was allowed to take on board with her all her most valuable personal possessions, a suite of seventy-three persons, and—one curious passenger—a favourite one-horned cow, named Caroline, to provide milk for the children on the voyage. The *Tremendous* sailed to join the fleet at Gaeta; the bombardment ceased; and the little princes and princesses were taken on board to join their mother.

On arriving at Trieste the captain of the *Tremendous* offered to convey Mrs. Pulsford and Miss Davies back to England, but the Queen would not part with them. She declared that they had done so much for her children that she wished them to share their exile at Vienna. However, by the time the children had sufficiently recovered from their sufferings during the siege to continue their journey, Miss Davies' illness had so increased that she had to be left behind. She must then have regretted that she had not accepted the captain's offer of a passage home. As it was, she sailed for Naples in a ship on which she was the only woman passenger, and which was driven so far out of her course by storms that they narrowly escaped shipwreck off the Turkish coast.

It is plain, although Miss Davies does not admit it, that when

the parting had come, Queen Caroline had treated her rather shabbily. In spite of all her expressions of gratitude, £40 was hardly a munificent gift to the faithful governess who had been disabled in her service. It barely defrayed the expenses of her travels home. To the captain and officers of the *Tremendous* the Queen had been able to give magnificent and extravagant presents. Still, deposed royalties often find it easier to dispense diamonds than cash.

The doctor at Trieste had advised Miss Davies to try the mineral baths at Ischia for her neck; but owing to delays and storms the bathing season was over by the time that her ship reached Naples. She was obliged therefore to wait for some months in a place where everything reminded her of happier days spent in very different circumstances with her 'dear and honoured personages.' She also narrowly escaped imprisonment as a spy of the ex-Queen, but was able to clear herself of suspicion. There an old pensioner of her 'dear princesses,' an ancient dame supposed to be 136 years of age, who had been the nurse of Charles IV of Spain, told her that King Ferdinand on his return had rated her soundly because she had accepted money from Murat's family, called her an old Jacobin, and refused to do anything more for her. This remarkable old lady was in excellent health, and had the flaxen hair of a child.

After all, when the season came round again, the baths of Ischia gave Miss Davies no relief. Disappointed and impoverished, she set out at last on the long journey by road to Paris. In those days those who could not afford to travel in their own carriage went by 'voiturin.' The owner and conductor of such a vehicle entered into a written agreement with his passengers to convey them safely to their destination for a certain sum, which included supper and lodging at the inns where they stayed. Miss Davies knew nothing of her fellow-travellers, was deeply suspicious of their honesty, and had many alarms on her journey. There was a 'tall intrusive gentleman' with very pleasant manners who worried her with his attentions and tried to borrow money from her. His manners became less pleasant when she refused; and she was afterwards told that he was a thoroughly bad character. In Rome the inn at which the diligence put up 'was situated in a narrow dismal street . . . which seemed to be fit for those scenes of robbery and murder, in which travellers are so often said to be the victims.' They were delayed there for twelve days, until the conductor had secured enough passengers to fill his

vehicle. At last, much to her relief, she reached England without further difficulties; and finally, after the doctors had given up her case as hopeless, she returned to her native Anglesey.

Now and then, at very long intervals, letters, always in answer to her own, came to her from members of the Murat family. They were divested of all their titles now; Achille, the elder son, who had once been 'Prince Royal of the Two Sicilies,' signed himself plain Achille Murat. He and his brother Lucien had migrated to America, where the two were by turns planters, postmasters, and lawyers. (But Lucien lived long enough to return to France, and to be recognised by Napoleon III as a prince of the blood royal under the title of Prince Murat.) They all expressed themselves very affectionately, but they did not send her the substantial help she so needed. Once she must have asked Madame Murat for assistance, for in reply she received 'un petit souvenir,' and a letter regretting that, knowing her position, she could do no more for her. Caroline Murat spoke in 1837 of a plan to visit London in the following year, and promised, if she did so, to send for Miss Davies. It is unlikely that the meeting ever took place; or Miss Davies would certainly have mentioned it. The ex-Queen died in 1839, before this little book was written. Her two daughters had both married Italian noblemen. As for the youngest, once the Princess Louise, 'my beloved charge,' she seems to have forgotten her old governess completely. After all, the child cannot have been more than ten years old when they parted at Trieste.

If Miss Davies felt that she was neglected, that the family might have done more for her, she would have been too loyal to say so. As time went on, those rare letters were her only link with the past. She must have showed them round very proudly when the old ladies of Beaumaris met to drink tea together, in little drawing-rooms looking out over the Green at the view whose familiar beauty had so soothed her when she first came back here in search of health. Only, as she listened to all the small gossip of the place, she must often have been aware of the gulf which experience had set between her and those more placid lives. Often, as she looked out from her window at that lovely stretch of sea and the mountains beyond, she must have seen in imagination the bluer seas of a more famous bay; often, as the thunder of blasting rolled out from the Welsh slate quarries, she must have heard instead the thunder of the British guns bombarding the fortress of Gaeta.

THE FINGER POST.

ACROSS the field, beyond the church,
 You see the signpost stand,
 And towards the roadway lean and lurch
 With crazy outstretched hand,

Faint marks upon whose surface show
 Some letters there were traced
 Which wind and weather long ago
 Have more than half effaced.

What matters it if far or near
 The place whose name was writ ?
 The course the signpost bids you steer
 Will never lead to it.

One moonless night, I sometimes think,
 When all the cats were grey,
 Some homebound reveller, filled with drink,
 Came rolling up this way,

Who, pixy-led, through wind and shower
 Went rambling all night long,
 And whiled away the passing hour
 With staves of hiccupped song.

Bestuck with briars from heel to chin
 And scratched by many a brier,
 The Good Folk led him out and in
 Of thicket, ditch and mire,

From moonrise until dawn almost,
 And then in playful mood
 They turned him to a Finger Post
 And left him there for good.

And still he stands, and leans about
 As he must surely fall,
 And points the Road to Nowhere out
 Where is no road at all.

He points the way through ditch and hedge
 And over field and furrow,
 And water meadow speared with sedge
 And banks where rabbits burrow.

By dale and down he points you still,
 And on the skyline's rim
 The scarecrow from the windy hill
 Waves gaily back to him.

C. FOX SMITH.

HORACE UNTRANSLATED.

RECRUITED under Ovid's banner
 I learnt the elegiac drill :
 To write in the Horatian manner
 Needs sterner training, higher skill.

That fluent bard, Corinna's lover,
 Makes added lines give added stress,
 But Horace studies to discover
 How to contrive one word the less.

Each word's a phrase, each phrase a story,
 Yet neither word nor phrase is odd ;
 His common-places shine with glory,
 The small talk of the Delphic god.

Over his sapphics, his alcaics
 Has art or instinct more control ?
 Who knows ? but in his wrought mosaics
 To change a word will mar the whole.

For him 't is not in contemplation
 To soar with Pindar's swan ; for me
 'T is not to follow in translation
 The flight of his Matinian bee.

HENRY BIRKHEAD.

MR. TEETLE.

BY G. LAPAGE.

I COULD see that he was frightened to death, poor little fellow. Evidently he had not expected to find anybody there. He had hoped it would be the same as all the other false alarms, just a cat, or the wind banging a door, or merely his wife's nerves: if, indeed, so poor a thing had a wife; and when he found that this time it really was a burglar at last, he was terrified. I could see his mouth quivering and the moonlight turned his cheeks to a curious blue-green colour. But he stood up to me as well as he could. I saw his lips frame words, but no sound came out of them at first. Then he swallowed hard and his voice came to me reluctantly.

'How . . . how dare you . . . !' he said feebly, endeavouring with all his might to steady the trembling of the candle that he carried. I should have laughed if I had not been so interested in the way in which fear fought with indignation in him. It was obviously a contest between the timidity of his real self and his pride as a householder and owner of property. He was mortally afraid of me, but he did not see why I should be allowed to steal his belongings. I could see that timidity was rapidly winning. Or it might have been merely that his regard for his property was not very great. The instinct of possession may have been weak in him, so that he did not find it worth while to go to the trouble of a fight to retain his goods. But there was a strong element of fear also, and I could see that he was enjoying that, although he probably was not himself aware of the fact at the time.

I did not, however, care to rely too much upon his fear. Fear is a curious thing. It often prompts really timid men to perform suddenly the most desperately courageous acts, acts which in their normal condition they could not even imagine. I—and other members of my profession—have suffered from this phenomenon too often to be so foolish as to despise or ignore it. I had to remember also that he might possess a wife; and experience has taught me that a man will often fight for his wife's property when he will not take the trouble to defend his own.

I remembered, further, a more subtle truth which I commend to the attention of any other burglars who may read these words. I would remind them that many men will fight anything rather than show the white feather before their wives. This may be due to a genuine desire to save their beloved the humiliation of discovering that she has, so to speak, 'picked a chicken'; or it may be due to a selfish desire to preserve their dignity at all costs before the lynx eye of a wife whose respect they are afraid they may be losing. But most frequently, I think, it is due to the simple fact that their fear of their wives is greater than their fear of any other thing, natural or supernatural.

A wide experience of shivering husbands encountered in their nightshirts in forlorn lobbies has convinced me that there is much truth in this latter conclusion; and I do not think that I have been prejudiced against them by the cruel disadvantage at which they have stood. On the contrary, in spite of the fact that I have, in the natural course of my profession, enjoyed quite peculiar opportunities of penetrating to the naked realities of married life, I have conceived a profound regard for most husbands. I have especially developed a great pity for those husbands who are not strong enough to transcend their wives' opinion of them; and, paradoxical though it may seem, it is this very regard for this class of husband and my consequent desire to help them, that has moved me to relieve them periodically of all those trinkets and valuables by the gift of which they have pathetically endeavoured to consolidate their positions in their respective homes. For the loss of property with which we have grown perhaps too familiar does at least remind us of its existence and may also make us remember those who gave it to us. By removing a wife's jewellery, therefore, I not infrequently perform the kindly act of reminding that wife of her husband's generosity in the past. That in itself may not of course make for connubial bliss. But my subtle act creates in addition in the heart of the wife a new and lively desire for fresh and thrilling trinkets to replace those that have been lost. The husband is thus provided with an opportunity of gaining more kudos by means of further gifts. Finally, since this means that the valuables are transferred from the well-guarded shops to the relatively easily cracked dwelling-houses, I am gratuitously provided with further opportunities of averting connubial woe. It is, you see, a closed system, a perfect cycle, which brings satisfaction to all concerned.

This alone should be sufficient to prove that it is a serious aim of my profession, as I conceive it, to consolidate by every means in my power the foundations of the Matrimonial State. But I will advance further proof. For I can conscientiously say that it has always been one of my most cherished principles never to expose a husband's cowardice before his wife if I can possibly avoid doing so. My whole soul recoils from such an act. Apart from the treachery to my sex that it would involve, I could not bring myself to perform an act so wickedly anti-social.

In the case, for example, of which I have already given some details, I was unable to bring myself to risk the occurrence of such a catastrophe. As I looked at the little man, I felt it difficult to believe that he could have succeeded in having a wife. Yet, knowing women as I do, I deemed it necessary to make sure; and even as I was about to do so, my caution was amply justified. For I heard footsteps overhead and a terrible voice struck upon my ears.

'Archibald!' it cried. 'Have you secured him? Hold him fast while I get to the telephone.'

The mixture of authority and anxiety in the voice was so amusing that I almost laughed aloud; but I was restrained by the look of horror in the little man's eyes. I saw him measuring me with a pitiful and desperate terror. The footsteps began to descend the stairs. He cast one hunted look in their direction and then a glance full of mingled fear and appeal at me.

'Hold him, Archibald!' cried his wife from the foot of the staircase. 'I am telephoning for the police!'

His terror increased. He tried to move towards me but could not. The fingers of his hands clenched and unclenched in the agony of his dilemma.

'Damn you!' he said bitterly, with tears in his eyes. I had a momentary lust of blood. I longed to plunge my fist into his pallid sweating face and teach him how to address a gentleman. But my absurd imagination intervened. It pictured to me what he would look like when I had done with him. It showed me the disillusionment of his wife, her horror, her pity, her slow realisation that she had misplaced her confidence in her husband and the vengeance she would take upon him for her own faulty judgment. It would be horrible, tragic. I did not care to cause the fellow so much misery.

I emptied my pockets, therefore, of all the jewellery that I

had stolen. I threw it picturesquely about the floor. I took his shivering little body in my arms and playfully rumbled his hair into convincing disorder. I scratched his ears and gave him a tap upon the eye hard enough to raise a weal for him to show to his wife and friends. Then I upset a chair or two, shuffled about a good deal and swore. Finally, with a cry of 'Mercy, Guv'nor!' that would have done credit to any melodrama, I banged the kitchen door and fled.

In the morning I found I had scored a complete success. For the papers were full of the heroic battle of one Mr. Teetle with a burglar. There was a photograph of the disordered kitchen and another of Mrs. Teetle proudly ministering to her husband's monstrous black eye. When I saw the latter, I felt sorry that I had hit him so hard. It was the one little bit of exaggeration in what was, I flatter myself, in other respects as perfect a work of art as any that I have done. Yet, on second thoughts, I decided that the expression on Mrs. Teetle's face fully justified it. I foresee that, when I pay them another visit later on, there will be more jewellery than ever in her dressing-table. I shall therefore not hesitate to pay them another visit.

For even the sentimental psychologist is worthy of his hire; and, although it is possible that Mr. Teetle may not be great enough to realise the full measure of his debt to me, yet I could not be so inartistic as to ask him to discharge it willingly and openly. The most that I care to ask of him is that he shall not wilfully keep his wife awake in the future. I do not think that Mr. Teetle is in the least likely to do that. And I daresay he will have the sense to see to it that, when I come for my wages another time, he will not be himself awake to interrupt me.

THE SPANISH MAIN TO-DAY.

III. FLOOD.

BY RAWDON HOARE.

LIFE on the banana plantations of Central America is not without excitement. The year had been a trying one for the usual drought in May, June and July had trespassed into August with disastrous results. A careless peon had dropped a cigarette-end or perhaps lit a small fire in one of the plantations and the flames, fanned by the trade winds which blow from the Caribbean Sea, destroyed over 1,500 acres of cultivated crops.

For three days and nights we had fought this fire, but the large amount of dry banana leaves, and stumps and logs which had never been cleared away before planting, made it a difficult task, and over a thousand peons were employed before the fire had been finally got under control. Two men and one woman had lost their lives and an overseer's house and three labour camps had been burnt.

No sooner had the fire been extinguished than one of the periodical revolutions started, and we had all spent an exceedingly unpleasant time trying to parley with the revolutionary troops so as to prevent them taking our lives and damaging our property, and then after their defeat being obliged to impress on a tottering Government that we had no interest in revolutionary affairs. But the task had been accomplished—the revolutionary troops had fled to the hills—the Government appeared satisfied and once again a glow of cordiality existed between the authorities and ourselves.

Together we heaved a sigh of relief, but there were still feelings of uneasiness, for the sun looked sullenly down on the withered-up plantation; we were afraid of other fires breaking out at different points, although fire-guards had been stationed at intervals over the whole property so as to give immediate warning of the first sign of smoke. At sundown, the distant echo of thunder could be heard rolling over the mountains, and faint flashes of lightning in the distance might be seen, but the rains had not yet broken, nor were they likely to for the next few days.

Amid that mass of dried-up vegetation where only the tops of

the tall banana mats remained green, the house and garden seemed an isolated splash of colour ; only at night when the mystic shadows of the moon bathed the plantation in a seemingly unnatural light bringing death to life and obliterating with its soft touches the hideousness of drought, did the natural beauty of the country become apparent.

The house was built of wood on concrete piles about five foot high, painted yellow with a red corrugated-iron roof surrounded by a garden, to me an immense pleasure, for plenty of water came down in pipes from the hills. Such a mass of colour was this garden—the most vivid green lawn with beds of flowers and here and there were flamboyant trees with blooms of orange—over the porch and across my bedroom window climbed bougainvilleas, both crimson and white—and in the shade of a large mahogany tree was a pond surrounded by the most lovely ferns. Underneath the house lived my macaw and two small jaguar cubs.

One morning, just after the revolutionary troops had been finally dispersed, the telephone rang, and I was told that news had arrived from the interior of particularly heavy rains which were likely to flood the Uloa River—one of the largest in Honduras, flowing about a mile away from the house. A short while after, a message arrived from one of the overseers saying that the river was rising steadily and could I lend him all the headquarter peons to help mend a break in the mud embankment through which quantities of water were rushing over the plantation. I replied that the men would be sent as soon as possible, and despatched a messenger to the labour camps with instructions to collect all available hands.

In about a quarter of an hour ninety peons had been collected at the back of the house, all in a tremendous state of excitement, laughing and joking as if they were on their way to a bank-holiday fête. Although a large proportion were Hondurians, Nicaragua, Salvador and Guatemala were also represented, for the labour force on a plantation is mixed. All were armed with machetes—long knives which they used for almost everything, from committing a murder to the cutting of their toe-nails, and many had revolvers dangling from belts simply bristling with cartridges. I instructed two of the assistants to lead the men the nearest way to the break, while I started up my small gasoline rail-car used for purposes of supervising the estate.

Long before I had driven to the actual spot where the mud

embankment had broken, the roar of the rising river could be heard, though as yet no water had actually penetrated that part of the plantation. But a little farther on, the flood was backing up a bridged creek and only with difficulty could we get the car across, but once on the other side, the gap in the embankment could be seen—so, sending the car back into safety, I floundered over the swampy ground.

Two or three overseers from adjoining properties had also arrived with their peons, making a total force of two or three hundred men, all frantically filling thousands of sandbags and throwing them into the enormous gap. The river looked ugly as, swirling down with a terrific roar, it carried all before it—angry and grey—logs, banana mats and trees were floating down at terrific speed towards the sea; but overhead, the pitiless sun still scorched, and no sign of the approaching rains could be seen. Rapidly the river had been rising for the past few hours, and I could see at once that it would shortly flow over the top of the bank and continue in its destructive course through those same plantations so recently damaged by fire.

By the time the peons from my headquarters had arrived, most of the men were wading waist deep in the water in their now quite useless efforts to stop the flood. Suddenly the gap widened, one of the sides on which three or four men were working collapsed, throwing them into the turbulent water. Fortunately, they fell clear, and as soon as they had recovered from the ducking, they were able to cling on to some of the floating logs until the bank could be reached a few hundred yards farther down. But it made me realise that any further work was not only ineffectual but dangerous, so I gave orders that the men were to return as best they could to their respective camps and await events; but that all mules and other live stock must be rounded up immediately and driven with all speed up to the pastures in the hills.

The return journey proved both wet and full of venture, for two or three creeks—now changed into small rushing rivers—had to be crossed, and as the bridges were completely submerged, we were obliged to form a chain in order to get over.

Back at my headquarters, things looked ominous, water had already filled the drains, much to the delight of the native children who were bathing and making mud pies; and a small river—a hundred yards away—had overflowed its banks and was rising two or three inches over the railroad bridges.

Within an hour the plantations were covered with a sheet of water at least an inch deep, in spite of the large quantity absorbed by the thirsty ground ; the lawn in front of the house felt slushy, and puddles had formed here and there. On enquiring, I found that the stock were safely on their way to high pastures, but that three small calves had been left behind.

'What is to be done with them ?' enquired the stockman, 'for if the river rises much further, they will be drowned' (the outside buildings were not built on piles).

'Shut them in one of the spare rooms in the office building and make sure that they are fed with bottles,' I replied.

'You had better also have the macaw, the jaguar cubs and any other pets brought up into safety.'

'Very well, Señor, but they will not be safe for long,' he grumbled pessimistically.

By the time lunch was finished, the flood had increased, it no longer being possible to leave the house without paddling in the water and slush ankle deep. The roar of the river could be heard ever closer, and in the distance the rumble of thunder rolled over the hills. In the peons' camp pandemonium reigned—dogs, donkeys and all kinds of curious animals were being heaved and pushed up the verandah steps, while men and women rushed about catching their chickens and ducks ; the latter, delighted at the unexpected turn of events, endeavoured to evade unwelcome capture with surprising agility for such ponderous birds. The more they fluttered, the more their pursuers cursed ; some being lured into deep drains now hidden by the flood ; the women, laughing and screaming, pulled up their skirts to indecent heights and joined in the chase.

By sundown the water had risen a good three feet and the flowers of the garden were entirely submerged, except for a few tall bushes peeping their heads above the water with looks of intense surprise. The plantation was just a sea of water, the banana mats like great ostriches with green heads. Over the mountains the clouds had gathered into a threatening storm and flashes of lightning pierced the nearest hills. The roar of the river came closer and, standing on the front verandah watching the sun sink below the horizon, one saw a strange sight—surrounded by flood on all sides, steadily deepening—a veil of water from the oncoming storm rushing towards us from the hills which had now passed out of sight—the atmosphere being broken only by the

gurgle of water as the river, trespassing farther from its bed, swept towards the house, its prey ; one felt like some shipwrecked mariner gazing on a stormy sea.

The electric light had failed, for the batteries and engine had been quickly hauled to safety on the back verandah. Candles had been lit, which, sticking out of empty beer bottles, gave but a feeble light in such a large building and only enhanced the general dreariness of the scene. Five or six young Americans had settled down to a game of poker, while my senior assistant and I watched with concern the water rise. Nothing could be done, but one wondered how long the building would remain on its legs.

But suddenly the whistle of wind heralded the storm's approach—flashes of lightning now obliterated the feeble candlelight as the thunder vibrated through the house and extinguished the candles one by one. The poker players left their game and joined us on the verandah. With increasing violence the wind swept round the house—the roof rattled and a small outbuilding was carried away, the floor of the house seemed to tremble at the storm ; again the wind made another mighty effort and everything for a few minutes seemed unreal in the hopeless confusion—part of the roof was hurled into the water, lights were blown out, while papers, books and various utensils came hurtling across the room. Outside, the banana mats were flattened to the ground and in a few minutes almost the entire crop extending over 8,000 acres had been ruined for a year. The wind having finished its work of destruction died away, and the rain began to fall in torrents, as if to atone for the trouble it had caused by arriving late. Lightning flashed all round us, and for a time we seemed dazed. Then suddenly a vivid explosion rocked the room as if some enormous howitzer shell had descended, to be followed by a crackle like machine guns and a strong smell of phosphorus. Seizing fire extinguishers, we rushed to the kitchen wing from where the terrified servants ran, shouting that the house had been struck—the cook killed and that the kitchen roof was burning. It all proved true, but fortunately, the wind had dropped and, as the roof was made of iron, between us with four extinguishers we soon had the flames under control. But the poor old negro cook looked a dreadful sight ; most terribly burnt, and long past any human aid.

As soon as some kind of order had been restored, our attentions were directed again on the flood, for the water had risen to a good five feet and a small trickle could be seen entering under the front

door; there seemed also—probably due to imagination—a slight buoyancy in the house, as if the entire building was shortly to float away from its concrete piles. The gap in the roof had resulted in part of the floor becoming nearly an inch deep in water, but two new tarpaulins from the store-room soon provided protection from the now steadily decreasing rain.

In the room adjoining the office, the calves bellowed for their mothers—the jaguars, terrified, paced their cage in amazement, while the macaw sat on its perch making the most awful din. Everybody looked utterly helpless, and I felt certain that we would hear of fresh disasters from the camp. We also felt uneasy as to the fate of two of my overseers, whose houses were situated not far from the river banks, but afterwards we learnt that, as the ground was higher, the water had never risen deeper than four feet.

The rain had stopped and, except for the roar of the river and the interminable and irritating croaking of innumerable frogs, the night was still. The water trickled very slowly under the door, but otherwise during the past half an hour the flood had not risen. Then, from a short distance away, came cries from a camp foreman.

‘One of the camps has been swept from its piles into the water,’ he cried.

‘Has anybody been injured?’ I answered.

‘Yes, Pedro’s leg is broken, a woman has been hurt, but we don’t know what is the matter with her, and a child has been lost.’

‘All right. Get Pedro and the woman into one of the other camps and tell some men to search for the child—we will come over to the camp as quickly as possible,’ I shouted.

‘*Muy bien*, Señor, but you will find it difficult to wade through the flood.’

‘Let’s get the water trough which I saw floating at the back of the house and make a boat,’ suggested one of the assistants.

‘Very well, you and B—— can try it if you like, but the other three and I had better swim and wade as best we can; there is no creek between here and the camp, so there shouldn’t be any actual danger.’

So we started off—standing at the top of the steps before the plunge reminded me of a boathouse in Norfolk on the edge of a lake where I first learnt to swim, but a long way off then. By the light of the moon, I could see that everything had been shattered by the storm, and the railroad leading straight to the camp along which we had to wade was covered with litter and banana stalks

from the wrecked plantation. We floundered, swam, coughed and spat, until at last the camp was reached; the hundred yards had taken over twenty minutes to cover, and reminded one of an obstacle race rather than a bathe. Behind us, we could hear a good deal of shouting from the water trough which had apparently been launched and then capsized.

The lighted camp—lit by hanging lanterns—looked rather like a liner wrecked at sea, for we could see the most distant building had been partly overturned with one end submerged in the water. We were met by two foremen and some peons who waded out to help us over a wide drain. More dead than alive, we scrambled up one of the camp steps and found that the verandah and rooms were deep in water. The natives looked wet and miserable, some sitting on tables, others on boxes; anywhere to get away from the flood. The women and children were terrified and busily occupied in requesting intervention from the Saints. However, things might have been far worse, for there was nothing much wrong with the woman, and the child—poor little mite—had been found half-drowned in the end room of the wrecked camp, and although wrapped in dry blankets, shivered, chattered and sobbed. Only Pedro seemed in a bad way, for his leg had been seriously damaged in the fall, so I gave him some strong tablets which relieved the pain.

We did all we could to cheer up the natives and were nobly supported by one of the stockmen playing La Paloma on a guitar—everybody joined in the chorus, and soon the camp became a more cheerful sight, many looking on the night's events as rather a joke; but nobody—except ourselves—mourned the old cook, for he was a negro, and therefore *bestial*.

Back to the house we floundered, to find the water had risen no higher and had, in fact, dropped the fraction of an inch. We changed our dripping clothes and drank large cups of steaming coffee, each with a liberal supply of brandy to keep out the cold! The pets also were fed, but the jaguars had been so frightened when the house was struck by lightning, that they refused to eat properly for two or three days.

In the morning a depressing sight was unfolded. Every banana stalk was flattened, for the submersion of the roots in the water had loosened the soil, the task being completed by the cyclonic force of the wind; a depressing sight, as the work of a year had been destroyed in one night. The water was still three or four feet

deep, but was quickly receding, and within another twelve hours we hoped to stand on dry land.

As I gazed from the verandah on that sunny morning, I wondered if people in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, when buying bananas from either a shop or a coster's barrow, quite realised the difficulties under which they are grown.

NIGHTFALL, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

NIGHT falls. On hills where once the Red Man roamed
Vast purple shadows of the evening lie.
A single star comes out beyond the pines
To watch the daylight die.

Orchestral music from the forest sounds.
Led by the winds, the trees their farewell take
Of the long summer's day. Nest-seeking birds
Their last songs make.

The waters of the lake are moved, as though
Some prehistoric creature stirred from sleep.
Its depths are shadowed, green and dark, below
Tall cliffs, storm-scarred and steep.

Now ring the echoes from the rocks and caves
On distant ranges, where the coyote's cry
Shatters the silence : shrilling wild and clear
Into the empty sky.

No lullaby is this. Sleep's not for him.
His hours of feast and hunting are begun.
But first his tribute, like the rest, he pays
To the departing sun.

GRACE JACKSON.

Vernon, British Columbia.

THE RUNNING BROOKS.

- Pleasure Trove*: E. V. Lucas (Methuen, 6s. n.).
Experience: Desmond MacCarthy (Putnam, 7s. 6d. n.).
The Endless Adventure: Vol. III. F. S. Oliver (Macmillan, 10s. n.).
Jesus: Edmond Fleg (Gollancz, 10s. 6d. n.).
Soldier's Wife: Conal O'Riordan (Arrowsmith, 7s. 6d. n.).
A House Divided: Pearl S. Buck (Methuen, 7s. 6d. n.).
Winds of Pity: Nell Hanson (Murray, 7s. 6d. n.).
Fly Fishing for Trout: R. D'Oyly Hemingway (Cranton, 6s. n.).
Loved River: H. R. Jukes (Faber, 7s. 6d. n.).
The Naiad and other Poems: Frank Eyre (Shakespeare Head Press, 3s. 6d. n.).
The Golden Chalice: Ralph Gustafson (Nicholson & Watson, 2s. n.).

THERE is something almost heroic in the cursoriness, the off-handed finality with which Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary defines that most intangible, elusive, delightful or irritating of all literary forms—the essay—and, by implication, the essayist, as the author of 'a written composition less elaborate than a treatise.' For he is a brave man who, with all the pages of literary history open (or more probably closed) beside him, could conceive and then deliberately enshrine between stiff covers a phrase so magnificently inadequate, so pitifully and coldly unclothed. That it is fundamentally true makes its shivering wretchedness the more disconcerting. 'A written composition,' yes; 'less elaborate than a treatise,' yes. But why strip from it wit and vision, the grace of style, the bright dyed garments of knowledge, the fashion of individuality, and brand the poor thing by negative comparison? All of which only goes to show how difficult it is to 'crib, cabin and confine' within dictionary limits a form of literary art that acknowledges mastery in such characteristically differentiated work as that of the three authors named first in our list this month.

It is inevitable that many of Mr. E. V. Lucas's enormous public will mentally substitute 'treasure' for the first word in the title of his latest volume, *Pleasure Trove*, a collection of reprinted essays whose subjects range from the six saints of Cancale in the bay of Mont St. Michel to a suggested remedy for pre-dawn insomnia and its resulting abjectness of spirit. Many of these pages are 'E. V. L.' at his best, humorous, erudite, ironical, and kind. A very pleasant and, as is his subtle way, informative book that, as it were, takes the reader most beguilingly into the author's confidence.

The rather stern title chosen by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy for

the third volume in his series of collected essays should not deter anyone who values fine writing and first-class criticism from reading it; *Experience* is one of those rare books into which it is possible to dip or to read straight through with equal pleasure and profit. How wide is Mr. MacCarthy's range of knowledge, how sure, gracious, and humorous his touch he has already revealed through years of distinguished work as critic and essayist. Of this book it can be said that it is a delightful example of the method and thought of one who has deservedly earned for himself an unassailable position, not only by maintaining standards but by creating them.

There is a tragic blank on the final page of the third and last volume of Mr. F. S. Oliver's *The Endless Adventure*—an unfinished sentence whose completion was frustrated by the author's death. Certain sections of the book are also incomplete, if not in matter at least in arrangement as Mr. Oliver himself points out in a prefatory note to 'A Political Testament'; in which the author, being pressed for time, 'throws a clumsy pontoon across the river of events, instead of building the series of bridges which originally he had planned.' To 'the common reader,' however, for whose instruction and delectation Mr. Oliver caters so significantly with all the artistry of manner and presentation that have placed his name in the forefront of the political essayists of a generation, these 'clumsy pontoons' lack neither solidity of building nor grace of form. In company with their architect he traverses the turbulent waters of early Hanoverian politics with delightful ease, enlightened by vivid interpretation of individuals and of a period in terms of one another.

Turning from the essay *par excellence* and characteristic to the pages of M. Edmond Fleg's *Jesus* is like laying down the script of a play to pass into the darkened auditorium of a theatre on whose lighted stage drama, tense, terrible, magnificent, is in progress. Not that M. Fleg has over-dramatised the moving story of the paralytic who, cured in the house of Simon Peter, followed Jesus and, for his refusal to bear the cross to Calvary, became the Wandering Jew of all centuries and all lands. On his lips the tale of the Ministry and Passion of Christ becomes once more a thing of ineffable personal and universal significance, though it is natural, in view of the author's birthright, that its most intense and dramatic applications should be in relation to the Jewish race. This is a book worth serious consideration by those of all nations and all creeds. Apart from the tragedy and the splendour of its subject,

it carries the reader into regions where speculation is transfixed, if not always clarified, by reality. It is a voicing not of faith but of that agnosticism which cannot believe because it will not—a tribute, an indictment, a prayer, and a forecast by one who, having 'been with Jesus,' can neither reconcile the past with the present nor the future with either. 'If Israel gives the world this God when it is blind, what God will Israel give it when it has sight?' An apologia for Christianity or for Judaism?

Among the relatively small band of contemporary novelists who regard the creation of atmosphere as at least as important a part of their art as characterisation or 'plot' Mr. Conal O'Riordan and Mrs. Pearl Buck stand out conspicuously.

It has not been my good fortune to read either 'Soldier Born' or 'Soldier of Waterloo,' the two novels with which Mr. O'Riordan's trilogy began. Nevertheless, the very opening pages of *Soldier's Wife*, which tells how David Quinn, disfigured at Waterloo thirty years earlier, returns from an Arctic expedition to his native Dublin, establish so lively an impression of place and period that the omission results only in an occasional hesitation in identifying some of the characters. It is a leisurely story this of the romance that came to David in middle age in the person of his dead friend's daughter, and it is perhaps the least interesting aspect of a book in which the masterly *milieu*-painting of Victorian Dublin and London and of a Continental tour takes precedence in interest and in memory. A notable book, as far removed from modern impressionism of method and outlook as it is possible to imagine.

Much the same may be said in regard to the atmosphere of Mrs. Pearl Buck's *A House Divided*, which carries the history of the Wang family up to the death of 'the Tiger' and traces the conflict between age and youth—the latter imbued with all the revolutionary unrest of thought and feeling fermenting in twentieth-century China—as shown in the relations between him and his only son, Yuan. Mrs. Buck has long since won acceptance for her almost uncanny understanding of the Oriental mind. This last volume of her brilliant trilogy makes that acceptance triply sure. For often it is permissible to wonder whether these pages that seem to glow as from within, with their appropriate, delicately stilted phrasing, their sharply visualised contrasts between East and West can in truth be fiction and are not rather the record of lives actually lived, of emotions actually experienced by those whose mental and spiritual heritage the author interprets so finely.

Miss Nell Hanson has adopted a different method in her promising first novel, *Winds of Pity*. Characterisation is her main concern, and in the case of her two chief protagonists, at least, she achieves considerable success. Her drawing of Jim McConnell, the young Presbyterian minister whose lack of moral stability and flair for histrionic effect wrecked his own career and his wife's happiness, has force and individuality. So, too, has that of Mary, the wife who bore so much and loved so well. But the book, despite its somewhat faulty structure, its sparseness of background, has a deeper significance than the bare outline of its story can convey. The pity of the title is here in ample measure; forbearance, charity. The author sees below the surface of things.

Mr. R. D'Oyly Hemingway, whose contributions to CORNHILL over the signature 'Hafren' have had such long and wide popularity, has now capitalised his forty-five years' experience in *Fly Fishing for Trout*, a handily arranged, lucidly illustrated volume that contains, in addition to its simple, practical exposition of technicalities, much good advice on the care of tackle, the choice of clothes, matters pertaining to licences and permits, and the cleaning and cooking of the catch, as well as the courtesies implied but not always practised in connection with what he aptly describes as 'the sport of a gentleman.'

Mr. H. R. Jukes, who will be remembered by our readers as author of a recent, admirable article on 'Tyne Trawlers,' is also a trout-fishing enthusiast. But his attractively named and admirably produced *Loved River*, though in it he has much to say on the actual practice of fishing, deals more extensively with the process of converting a small river, of which he is the proud possessor. How he constructed the necessary dams, guided and diverted his stream to form suitable pools, and generally made provision for the conservation and increase of their shining inhabitants, makes fascinating reading.

It is a pleasure to see writers who have won their way into the pages of CORNHILL with individual poems braving the venturesome open sea with the publication of volumes of verse. We give a welcome this month to two—Mr. Frank Eyre's *The Naiad*, and Mr. Ralph Gustafson's *The Golden Chalice*. In both cases publication is fully justified and may, we hope, lead on to further work of maturity and strength.

M. E. N.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 137.

THE Editor of the CORNHILL offers two prizes of books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue, to the two solvers of the Literary Acrostic whose letters are opened first. Answers must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must contain the Coupon from page iv of the preliminary pages of this issue. They must reach the Editor by the 30th March.

Reading old things,
Of ——— and lorn ———,
While the wind sings—
O, drearily sings!

1. For though the Muses should prove ———
And fill our empty brain,
Yet if rough Neptune rouse the wind,
2. To sport with Amaryllis in the shade
Or with the tangles of ——— hair
3. ——— sittin' on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side
4. The ——— are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
5. This be the verse that you grave for me :
—— he lies where he long'd to be ;
6. What does it all mean, poet ? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you ———
What we felt only
7. Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a King who buys and ———

Answer to Acrostic 135, January number : ' In the first sweet sleep of night ' (Shelley : ' The Indian Serenade '). 1. FootstepS (Matthew Arnold : ' Shakespeare '). 2. ImmortaL (Keats : ' Ode to a Nightingale '). 3. RoaE (Byron : ' The Isles of Greece '). 4. Slide (Wordsworth : ' Lucy '). 5. TriP (Milton : ' L'Allegro ').

The first correct answers opened were sent in by Miss Cayley, 190, Chesterton Road, Cambridge, and C. R. M. Strachan, Esq., 40, Northfield Road, King's Norton. These solvers are invited to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue.

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